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PILSUDSKI AND POLAND

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DURING THE BOLSHEVIK WAR
1920

PILSUDSKI AND POLAND

BY

ROM LANDAU

TRANSLATED BY GEOFFREY DUNLOP

LINCOLN MAC VEAGH
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TO THE READER

This is a romantic book.

Poland is its subject, and in the American reader, though his ideas on Poland may not be defined, the belief persists that Poland is the country of Romanticism.

And this book will shatter no illusions; it tells of Poland's hero, who is also her greatest romantic. But romanticism and the type of nation it engenders cannot, like the achievements of a classic world or the matter-of-fact spirit of to-day, be set within limits and defined. The laws which sway that spirit are more varied, their scope is wider and harder to enclose and circumscribe. Our own minds must have taken possession of such a world before we can understand its greatest men. Is it surprising that the achievements of this great—perhaps the last—romantic of our age should be harder to estimate than the action of more commonplace heroes? In Pilsudski there are no hard and fast lines which separate the soldier from the statesman, the statesman from the popular idol; and it is difficult, as yet, to decide the limits of his achievement, though its magnitude can, even to-day, be gauged, and we can feel the fascination of the curious world from which it springs.

So that what Pilsudski has achieved is rather to be read between the lines than in any actual deed; he is not merely the hero of a world of romanticism, but at the same time of a world of imponderabilia.

Such a world may seem strange—uncongenial perhaps—to the American, whose instinct for a definite standpoint,

a matter-of-fact and common-sense attitude to realities, has made him mistrust the imponderabilia of romanticism.

Must he not, therefore, be asked to be indulgent to a book which strives to set forth a world and a destiny that cannot be re-constructed from facts and documents alone?

It is no easy matter to trace the boundaries which seem to lie between reality and the impression which that reality engenders. If life is the product both of reality and of our feeling imagination, how can the destiny of a romantic be re-constructed only by facts and data?

It is the business of the political expert to erect a framework for the re-construction of an historical personality. May not the imaginative writer be permitted to seek other rooms in the store-house of creation,—to deepen, even to enrich, the wisdom of the specialist? Photography is a great art, but there are other ways of portraying the human face.

Berkley House, Frome, Somerset
Autumn 1929

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BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

"CLOUDS OVER POLAND"

From the wooden portico of the house, flanked with its plain pillars, forests stretched away into the distance; dark fir woods and a sky whose blues in summer even clouded again and again to icy steel. Amid such stretches of fir beneath such skies, the world had little place in it for gentleness.

But these grey depths could store up dreams. Glimpses were to be caught of ghostly worlds among the scurrying clouds—phantoms austere and merciless sweeping past. Heroes of saga peopled these forests and these hours. They filled the air with longings for some streaming victory of banners heralding purple and gold.

Immediate things seemed further. It was not always the day's reality that housed in the long, panelled manor among the many parlours and apartments, in the leaves of forbidden books, beside great stoves, in this isolation which had built up its own world. The noise of the hurrying world, events in Russia, secret news of miserable strivings at home in Poland broke into a remote magic air. Each seemed charged with portent and adventure.

These sounds were fraught with tragic seriousness; they struck deep chords which keyed them to a stirring music. Forest and sky, great distances, the bite in the wind, the snow in the air, hardened these folk, making them stronger and tougher, more courageous, more determined, more dreamy and fanatical than their countrymen to the southwest, in whose veins there ran no Lithuanian streak, only

the pure blood-stream of the Poles. Theirs was the bitter, passionate blood of frontiersmen, who must defend their goods and homes in rougher storms.

The Zulow estate, with its ancient limes planted round the manor door, its hills and pine woods, was the inheritance of Josef Pilsudski's mother, Maria Billewicz. The antiquity of her family's name gave her the right to marry a Pilsudski, even though the first glamour of that name had long faded. Family legend traces the Pilsudski descent from the Dorszprungs, Lithuanian princes in their own right, who, earlier even than the Gedymins, ruled in Lithuanian lands. To this day, as a sign of princely lineage, the family bears in its coat a mitre. Though this racial boast may be set on no unshakable foundations, the Pilsudskis can at least claim descent from a Polish-Lithuanian family whose seal is discoverable on the proclamation of Horodel as early as 1413.

In those days the name was Giniatowicz, the son, that is to say, of Giniat, Gineta or Ginialt. The name Pilsudski was first heard in 1625. Melchior, one of the sons of the justiciary Bartholomeij Giniatowicz, of Upice in the province of Zmudz, chose out of his father's five estates the estate of Pilsudy, and along with it the names Giniatowicz Pilsudski. In addition to these he bore another name, Rymsza, most probably the title to other property. Of the sonorous patronymics of this ducal inheritance, Giniatowicz—Pilsudski—Rymsza, the middle name alone—Pilsudski—survived in the course of centuries. And when in 1831 the Russian Herald's Office in St. Petersburg required of every noble in the empire evidence of his claims to nobility, the Pilsudski family could furnish incontestable proof that for more than three hundred years it had called the same land its own.

Maria Pilsudski's husband, Josef, the son of Peter Pilsudski, was a man of university education. He had studied agricultural science and attempted to turn his knowledge to account; built kilns and brickworks, and cleared his timber for farming. He was clear-headed and prized logic; the patriarch, white-bearded and absolute, on his estate.

His wife was gentler, more emotional. She taught her children to see their country as the highest of earthly goods, strove to be a mother of patriots in a land whose people were enslaved. No duty in the world could be so honourable as to fight for the liberation of Poles. With the word "Poland" on her lips her gentle quiet became fanatical. This tender, motherly woman felt it her duty to make her children love in her their country.

But the pain in these thoughts of liberty was forbidden to fill the house with empty clamour. It must throb in hushed voices through which, day and night, terror trembled of the eyes and ears of Czarist spies. Even a child had to master the art of veiled words and hidden actions; children breathed the air of conspiracies, of dark and secret battle.

The hatred which nourished these children's earliest years was directed against one enemy—Russia. In 1795, when Poland, after the third partition, had ceased once and for all to be a state, the Czar had had the largest share of booty. Of the three powers which shared out Poland, Austria gave the people most freedom. In Cracow and Lemberg, in Galicia, the old traditions and culture were allowed to develop unimpeded. Germany tried to colonize and teutonize, but in Russian Poland the oppression was by far the worst. Poles were deprived of every freedom, constitutional, educational, even religious. The

régime began with drastic measures, a tyranny without any parallel in the whole modern history of Europe. Terrorism and bloody repression became the order of the day. Functionaries and Russian officers were given a free hand with Poles. There was no method, legal or otherwise, of escaping petty tyranny and vexation. The very slightest show of Polish feeling entailed penal servitude and Siberia. Theatres were forbidden to stage the work of national dramatists: it was a crime punishable with several years' imprisonment to print any Polish classic. The ownership of a book on Polish history meant Siberia.

Disaffection and revolts were mostly confined to Russian Poland, but the dread reprisals and mediæval justice which followed them were enough in most cases to deprive the most courageous rebel of any heart for open revolt. They planned in secret for the future. Into such a world, on December 5, 1867, the son Josef was born.

Across the boy's birth and childhood lay the shadow of the bloody rebellion of 1863, that strangled, heroic protest of the tortured Polish spirit. Sinister echoes of this event rang through the boy's first lessons and experience. While in other countrysides children were learning games, were told of dogs and cows, dolls and tin soldiers, Ziuk, as they called him, listened to great words like "freedom," "war" and "history." The air he breathed was pitiless, grim, mysterious. But his nature seemed made for his environment. He was hard and vital, full of courage; wayward, headstrong and reserved. He longed to dominate and could brook no will beside his own. His brothers and sisters must obey him or he would burst into tears of rage which no word of appeasement or reason could console. He held fast to his own ideas with grinding obstinacy, never giving way till he had succeeded in forcing them on

others. If necessary he used other methods; he could charm an opponent with smiles, win him with a show of real friendship; and few could resist his blandishments. Dimly he began to sense the power of friendly words and smiles that charm. But his half-won knowledge did not rise, as yet, into his consciousness; his thoughts were busy with other things, his brain worked on and on at fever-heat.

His interests were continually new: he invented game after game, adventure after adventure. He loved best of all those escapades which gave his own talents scope, but in which he himself did not take part.

Secrecy and darkness must surround them. He offered a prize to any of his brothers who could succeed during the night, unseen, unheard, in snatching some book or ornament from his sleeping sisters' room and bringing it him in proof of a successful coup—a "quiet job." They were to hold their breath, stand on tiptoe, and creep among the sleeping girls. This game was christened "silent moving."

A breath in the dark would fill him with joyous excitement. But he seldom took part in these games; he organized, invented, led. His daring lay in original conception; others were left to execute his schemes. He was too impatient to work out an inspiration for himself. His nerves were for ever taut, his mind for ever restless. He would not stay in one place for more than a few minutes at a time. When the hairdresser came to the house Ziuk agreed to have his hair cut on condition that it should last three minutes.

And when he was tired of games he buried himself in a book. He read on avidly: books on war for choice; stories of the Greek and Roman heroes, novels on Napoleon; of the Emperor with his Marshals, of Berezina and the Pyra-

mids, of his Polish Legion which had helped him to conquer Spain; of the fighting round Saragossa and Somo Sierra, of Austerlitz and the flames which consumed victorious Moscow. Here, in the midst of Polish past and longing, Napoleon was a national hero. This countryside, whose son, Prince Josef Poniatowski, had died for France as one of Napoleon's Marshals, knew, in its remotest villages, the names of Delacroix and Meissonier, David and Delaroche, since their copied portraits of Bonaparte still decorated the log-built walls. The Napoleonic epic was living history, the remembered past. Here the Corsican begat a son; the land prized in him a herald of her liberties. The Napoleonic destiny fed the boy's imagination with every thrill of heroic life.

In 1874 a great fire laid waste the whole estate. House and courtyard, kilns and brickworks were burnt to the ground; the impoverished, debt-laden family moved to Vilna, where Ziuk, together with his elder brother, Bronislaw, was sent to a Russian school.

Ziuk's country was his dearest love; here, for the first time, this love was treated with contempt. Russian schoolmasters, semi-barbarians beneath their thin veneer of culture, did their best to trample out every spark of Polish feeling. Polish was forbidden, either in school or in the streets. No lessons were given in Polish. Only Russian prayer books were allowed. Polish history was taught as the history of the Russian Vistula province. No lie, in the course of all this, no fulsome glorification of Russia, no slanderous degradation of Poles, seemed too fantastic or too cheap to cram down the throats of the boys.

Such distortions only strengthened racial pride, pride born of the tradition of martyrdom, taken from an unreal and sometimes exaggerated atmosphere, re-enforced

by the bitter hate which springs from personal contacts. What not long since had been the romantic fancies of a boy became charged with deep emotion, guided by understanding, fed with will. A boy's natural opposition to his teachers, to an educational system, took on from the first day at school the colour of a political sentiment. Normal schoolboy dislike of a master and school authorities was transferred automatically to the nation for which these pedagogues stood.

Russia was no longer far off and indefinitely hostile, something with knouts and snow, mystic Czardom, sottish officials, cruel government. Russia was actual, ever present; a tangible prison wall, on which hour by hour he struck fresh wounds, a scourge under which he writhed, a visible, giant enemy. Russia had become a martinet, whose shining buttons and epaulettes stood for authority. In the mind of this hot-tempered boy, inclined to exaggerate and distort, hostility grew till all sense of proportion had disappeared. But those primitive weapons which the system turned on everything Polish gave ample excuse for each distortion.

The masters heaped fuel on the flames. Heroes, whose names their mother had spoken only with reverence, whose faded portraits she had kept hidden in secret drawers, whom a child's imagination had shaped as heroes, sacred and ineffable, were described every day as knaves and traitors. Risings that had flamed from the soul of an entire people; acts in which their grandfathers' courage linked them to their own blood, which these children had been taught to see as the summit of all noble achievement, were befouled by their masters as crimes. And the Russia against whom these deeds were done, battles fought with wounds and the graves of fathers and brothers, the

oppressor who had struck from the first white heat of revolt such daring as will rouse a man's wonder at the courage he had never known he possessed, was displayed in an oily voice of adulation as an anxious, beneficent parent.

The boys could only set their teeth; they sobbed and clenched their fists. They would lock themselves into rooms and pour out their rage and grief. They could foreshadow revenge in talk about the past, evoke and re-evoke their country's history. They could bemuse themselves and one another with the greatest of Polish names, savouring them like old and fiery wine; call up dreams in which the gayest bekiesha,[1] the kontush,[2] the konfederatka,[3] finely sprung Turkish sabres, the gleaming furs of motley, half-remembered national costume, composed a sumptuous world of vanished pomps, a world which sprang again into life, with every enticement of shimmering form and glowing colour—a world which seemed, in a way, to have reality.

They loved their speech and could use it for the sake of its own enchantment, not merely for the pictures it could paint. Words were possession, gift, a joy, an end in themselves. They released the deepest feelings each wanted so much to share.

But these boys found other ways to ease their hearts; they spoke of battles they would fight, made plans, out of their hatred and their longings, for a struggle which, one day, should be a victory. Ziuk was among the more reserved. His phlegmatic, Lithuanian blood made him less mercurial and garrulous, more taciturn, than his Polish

[1] Bekiesha—a long, fur-lined doublet, laced down the front.

[2] Kontush—a robe, usually trimmed with fur, worn from about the seventeenth century by the upper classes.

[3] Konfederatka—a traditional square cap, now part of the new Polish uniform.

friends, who threw away discretion far more readily. He would say very little, though he listened to their endless discussions and debates. But in school even he, from time to time, found it hard to be self-controlled. He would flare up and dart forth some phrase likely enough to betray to his schoolmaster the true state of his mind and heart. Such speech might have its dangers. Many of the masters were careful never to overstep the bounds of their function as pedagogues, never to probe the reserve which hid depths of national feeling. Others had formed different ideas of the parts they had been sent to play here on foreign soil at their country's orders; they attempted, since they were men with ambitions and schemes for promotion, to discharge with special zeal subsidiary duties: those strange officialisms of a semi-oriental power whose every functionary had to be agent provocateur and spy. Betrayal of oneself to such a master might have a "black ticket" as its consequence. Whoever was expelled from the school with a "black ticket" had his name reported to every school authority; the culprit was refused admission to all educational centres in the empire; further study was closed, and, with it, every learned profession.

But Ziuk learned self-control—to be tame and betray nothing of the storms that raged within him. He learned because he was obliged. The art of dissimulation, already a natural gift which the atmosphere of his home had helped develop, was carried at the Vilna school to a point where he renounced himself. He grew more and more withdrawn, more monosyllabic. More often now he puckered his thick brows till wrinkles scored his high forehead. No "black ticket" for him! His strength would be needed for things of far more importance than gestures and recriminations.

Only many years later, among friends, did he find words

of complaint about this time. "Helpless rage would often nearly choke me; my nightmares even to-day take the shape of Russian schoolmasters in Vilna."

Since there seemed no way out, since words must take the place of deeds, the boy's vivid, imaginative life could best be lived among books. Games and escapades had ceased to be possible. Confined closer and closer within himself he took small interest in the mediocre, provincial world around him. Books could give him strength and peace. He turned from remote pasts and heroes to the poets whose words had done battle for Poland, whose visions had seen her free.

He began to steep his mind in national poetry—in Mickiewicz, Krasinski—in Slovacki above all, whose voice with its haunting tragedy had thrilled his spirit on evenings when his mother read aloud.

But school-days drew to an end. Poems had ceased to satisfy the alert, restless spirit of this young man. His will was too strong, his thought too keen, he was emotionally too vivid to be content with alien words, outpourings of indignation—literature. As a little boy he had striven to make each thought a reality; had seen, in a flash, adventurous games, which must be put into action at once. He had seldom lain to dream beside a tarn, forgetting the hours and gazing into the grey-green depths of waters. And if ever he had flung himself to earth, stretched flat, and stared at hurrying clouds, it was not to lose himself in endless dreams. He strove in the driven sky to see only the forms he longed to make realities—would pick out clouds which made him feel that he himself had shaped the changing heavens. And when, sunk in thought, he followed with his eyes a mounting bird, a chafer or a bee, it was not to study the insect's flight or envy the bird his

wings. He was not a dreamer. The things at which he gazed were scarcely seen. He turned to them in silence because to work or play, to speak or heed, would have kept him from tracking his thought, driving it on till, at a definite point, it rested. Dreams took shape in projects and ideas. He would strive to hammer them out on many evenings, in solitary rooms.

He planned to liberate Poland. The shadow of the last rising had chilled his earliest steps; the failure of '63 left him no peace. Why had such reckless sacrifice, the splendours of a whole rebellion, ended in mire and shame so tragically? Was it possible to free one's mind and cease to think of Polish disasters? Ziuk answered that he had dreamed his dream of freedom . . . his dream of banners.

Continual thought on the failure of the last rising convinced him that no country can free herself till her slavery has become fully conscious. Public opinion would have to be roused and educated if one day it was to be ready for the battle of which so many dreamed; it must be organized, or all would end in fresh disaster. Scattered risings of isolated patriots were admirable, no doubt; but unless they would well up from hidden sources channelled by the will of a whole people through the co-ordinated strength of the land, such risings were senseless and doomed to fail. Knowledge, therefore, and enlightenment were a country's first necessities.

This and similar thoughts which took possession of Ziuk's mind were already in the air around him. Not only in provincial Vilna, not only in Warsaw, in Poland, even. They filled the air of the whole Russian Empire, the air in Petersburg and Moscow, the air in rich, commercial cities, in tiny corners of the provinces. Talk everywhere was heard on the necessity for enlightening the masses, for

making them conscious of their wretchedness. There were many projects of union, of centres of instruction for peasants, workers and students. Groups for self-education were formed; there were secret newspapers in which every battle-cry of enlightenment was trumpeted with profound self-confidence. People met, read books, discussed, flung wide the doors to Russian socialism.

This Petersburg socialism—its ideas as yet very vague —centred round a mysticism of "Holy Russia": it was inclined to distract the thoughts of young Poland and make them forget Polish independence. The Polish question was lost in nebulous yearnings after brotherhood and equality. Most students capable of any enthusiasm were quickly stirred by the seductive idea of universal human brotherhood, and began to see Polish autonomy, their erstwhile fighting objective, as a matter of secondary importance. Set beside the whole pain of the world, Poland shrank from a gaping wound into a tiny red scar.

Pilsudski alone felt himself deceived, betrayed by his friends. Russian socialism, universal brotherhood, comradeship with Russian peasants and workers, were all very well in their way; but what of his own country? From childhood up, Ziuk had seen the world dramatically. Now he beheld an enslaved mother, abandoned in chains by her youngest sons, in favour of a new love. He began to feel himself one with this great mother; she had become his possession, his sole inheritance. Over and over again his thoughts went back to 1863. His mind ranged in search of parallels, lessons, examples.

He read every book on the French Revolution on which he could lay hands in Vilna. Little by little he came to realize that a revolution can succeed only in the hands of a leader, never of a mass. Command must take the place

of indecision. If revolution is to mean more than blood and barricades, if it is to mean power as well, there must be leadership.

A leader? Ziuk trembled. If, at rare moments, he still lifted his eyes to the grey, cloudy sky over Vilna, he scarcely saw, now, the vague cloud forms of unknown warriors. He would force that sky, spanning it from horizon to horizon, to contain the single figure of a leader. Was not Poland's horizon vast enough?

CHAPTER II

SIBERIAN TWILIGHT

I

At the very moment when this eighteen-year old boy was leaving school and about to arm himself for future life, his mother died. The blow was heavy, but longings, which in the meantime had begun to take possession of his mind, were so strong that it could no longer shake him as profoundly as it would have done a few years previously. His gaze was set on the future. His mother was dead; the mother who had read aloud from Slovacki; who had first taught him the words "freedom" and "home." But he must go on. Days like these could spare no time for the private griefs of a son. The foundations must be laid of some profession. He went to Cracow. National and political interests had grown predominant. It scarcely seemed to matter what he studied. His profession in any case should only be a means to ends not included in the official faculties. He decided to study medicine. For the first time he found himself living on terms of friendship with Russians.

Among Russian students he met several revolutionaries, whose devotion to their cause filled him with envious admiration. Till now, among his Polish friends, he had met no such faith in an ideal. Nevertheless, he was not persuaded into becoming one of a new generation of Poles who could see only Russian socialism, and had struck the

colours of their nation. Though in comradeship beside them he was never to forget the barrier which must of necessity divide him from his country's enemies. His faith was shielded from any danger. He was rusticated and sent down for some petty breach of rules, went back to Vilna, and soon forgot his Cracow year.

While up to now nationalist ideas had never become tangible realities, now they began to shape themselves. He read foreign socialist literature, Liebknecht and Marx. His first hazy notions on the subject of "universal human brotherhood" gave place to reasoned premises. This new doctrine failed to arouse his enthusiasm, but he thought he saw in socialist teaching a possibly useful means for realizing many of his own still rather nebulous projects. He strove again to prove himself neither dreamer nor theorist, and proceeded at once to make plans. Together with a few friends he founded secret associations for the spread of popular education: a news sheet was hectographed and published, and in a short time Ziuk had become one of the most active members of the kind of Vilna secret society, scattered, in similar form and by the thousand, far and wide over Russia.

But this was not the thing he had longed for, without being able to express it in clear words. The image in his heart was still intangible. He was groping in the dark for a definite road which should lead him on to a clear goal.

Pilsudski felt this urge and his powerlessness. Yet no inspiration came from within him till a more far-reaching power pointed his way. Fate intervened.

At the beginning of 1887 Russian socialists planned an attempt on the life of Alexander III. Though he had no sympathy with the conspirators and was entirely ignorant of their intentions, he came under suspicion of complicity.

Kantcher, a Russian, a callow terrorist of nineteen, had come to Vilna from Petersburg to procure some chemicals necessary for the outrage. Bronislaw, Pilsudski's eldest brother, who was studying at the Petersburg university, had given him Josef's address. The affair had been so clumsily prepared that the Russian police knew fully and precisely each step Kantcher was to take. He was arrested on arrival at Vilna. In terror under cross-examination he gave the police a list of all the conspirators and their friends. Bronislaw Pilsudski was arrested in Petersburg; his brother Josef, in Vilna. In the affair itself Josef was not implicated. But it was enough for the authorities that he should have been known to one of its members. They saw their chance to be rid of a Polish student known to have ideas of Polish independence. The court passed on an entirely guiltless boy the most drastic sentence allowed by law—"five years administrative relegation" to Eastern Siberia. It was the heaviest punishment possible for a crime that had consisted in nothing but the most casual connection with Russian anarchists. Since previous knowledge of the outrage could be proved against his brother Bronislaw, he was sentenced to fifteen years in Sahalin. Several of those directly implicated were condemned to death: one who was hanged was Lenin's elder brother.

The first shock overwhelmed Josef. Even then he let little of this be seen. Reserve had always been a part of his nature, and the last years had served to increase it. He bit down his pain, and in parting from his family did his best to seem master of himself. On the journey east the first halt was called at Petersburg. Here he broke down. It was most natural that this romantic boy, whose environment had steeped him in emotions from the work and exiled life of Polish poets, should express his grief in

AS A RUSSIAN CONVICT
1887

verse. He wrote to his father, and for the first time abandoned all reserve. But he wrote a poem, not an ordinary letter of complaint.

Romanticism, reality, heroic tradition, were so entangled in his being that this gesture of tragedy seemed necessary, even for so reserved a nature as Ziuk's. He had been steeped from childhood up in the pain of such poets as Slovacki: had honoured each poem as the supreme expression of the human spirit's dignity. It seemed perfectly appropriate to write in verse this sorrowful letter to his father. In spite of his anguish the range of this poem was wider than the range of a single grief. It was a nation, no mere crucified individual, that had his suffering to bear. Once, he had felt as his own the wounds of his country, the great mother. Now he believed that a whole nation bled with his wound. The idea of martyrdom filled his mind: he saw in himself the symbol of a cause. These sorrowful, boyish lines proclaim his burning interest in the struggles of his native land.

This one agonized cry was enough to give Josef back his self-control. Little by little he settled down to meditate the tragedy of his fate. It seemed to him that out of these broodings he could evoke the significance of destiny.

If he had believed in God he might easily have grown resigned. He would never have dared to ask for reasons. But Ziuk would not allow himself to be swayed by any contemplation of God's power. For the present the question whether the forces that had hewn out this way before him were God's or not of God, seemed meaningless. But one thought he pondered over and over again: this way was predestined, no chance road. Could such savage punishment have come on him by chance? Might not its secret be some steeling of himself still further, some hard-

ening until he grew seasoned for a battle he had longed to fight since childhood? Christian humility before the incomprehensible necessity of a punishment sent by God was never present in his thoughts. He did not believe that any past was latent in this pain: it must be the price paid for his future. For him there was no such thing as suffering for unconscious sinning. Pain was only preparation. Belief in God would have forced him to submission—assent to a higher power. Such submissions for him were inconceivable, though he admitted the possibility of a destiny. Destiny was less defined: it entailed no resignations. Assent to a destiny left open more doors, gave him the right to more power. And where, in him, was there room for any all-powerful authority? His country's freedom was the one, the only God of his acknowledgment. He was her son, her servant, lover, protector!

He felt he saw with ever increasing clarity the whole horizon of his fate. Had not his life till now been a chain of events, all unconsciously leading on to one perception—that his longings for Polish freedom were more than dreams? The meaning of his guiltless exile seemed clearer and clearer as he thought. Must he not submit to every test, know all humiliations, be schooled by every discipline, since on him, as if by election, exceptional duties had been laid? To the most trifling occurrences of his past he began to lend this hidden significance. Each happening rose again magnified. To native pride was added a dim belief that he, as an individual, stood apart. He could feel himself no other than exceptional.

It was soon to be made apparent that in truth he had to pass through a discipline which spared most other men of his social and intellectual standing. Other prisoners suffered as he did, but no other mind gave so profound a

meaning to its suffering. For most it was no more than a terrible experience wounding body and soul. But that was all. Ziuk's consciousness was filled with the significance of his pain, never with the pain itself. The circle of his youth was incomplete, the last test had still to be withstood. Till now he had never come into open conflict with the enemy: his past fights had been fought out in the mind, in the pulse of his blood, at best in words. Sheer battle, till this time, had never been. And raw, physical discipline was unknown to him.

2

The road to Siberia was long, the prisoners' journey lasted several months. At last, at the end of September 1887, these Polish convicts, over twenty in all, reached Irkutsk. On the way they had called many halts, had got to know a chain of Russian prisons. Since these were no ordinary felons, but political prisoners, their standing entailed certain privileges. They were fully aware of these, and laid particular stress on their exceptional position and their pride in it. In Russian, but even more in Polish and Lithuanian revolutionary circles, it was a definite mark of ethical distinction to wander, a political exile, through the gaols of one's country's oppressor. One could be sure of a martyr's halo, though this headgear did not cost very much. Pride, in many of the prisoners, developed into arrogance, of which, whenever possible, they made their oppressors aware. Since almost without exception these were men of the upper classes, of wide culture and university training, they stressed their intellectual superiority to the warders and half-educated officers. Though better official treatment would have resulted from a less unbend-

ing attitude, it would never have occurred to one of the haughty convicts to exchange this impolitic weapon for anything more moderate. The romantic gesture was irresistible, though they paid in further suffering. The authorities strove by petty persecution and a tightening up of regulations to counter this attitude in the prisoners. On pretext of any small infringement, the governor of a "local prison" would arm the escort with written recommendations to the next authorities to chain the convicts on the slightest sign of indiscipline. The whole journey was made in an amosphere of tense hostility. It would sometimes happen that an officer of escort, indifferent and bored by this attitude, remained passive and gave his charges their way as though they were spoilt children. This nonplussed the prisoners, who then racked their brains to find fresh methods, goading, at last, the most patient into a fighting mood.

Irkutsk was the last important halt before their final destination. From here one gang was despatched to places in the neighbourhood; another, thirteen strong, remained in the gaol, to be drafted later a thousand kilometres east to Kirensk, on the Lena, a little town in north-eastern Siberia. Since the roads in this district only became passable in November, and the authorities wanted to wait for further transports, so as to send on a whole batch at one time, the thirteen Poles were allowed a few months' rest before setting forth on the final stage of their journey.

His months in gaol had accustomed Pilsudski to the outward conditions of prison life. He very soon got used to the strangeness of his surroundings. By this time he scarcely felt the discomfort of dark cells, of long marches on which every step clanked, of damp walls sprouting fungus and grey moss, of food, to which the son of a

Polish-Lithuanian noble, in a house whose good living was a tradition, was ill-accustomed. Still he would always sign with the others any letter of complaint to the authorities.

Eight of the prisoners lived in six cells, down the length of a long, narrow passage christened "the secret corridor." Pilsudski, with four companions, inhabited one long cell used as "Common Room" and dining-room by all prisoners. Here the exiles met to talk, take counsel, and draft letters of complaint. In the women's section there were three "comrades" under sentence of political transportation to East Siberia, on the same convoy. Till six in the evening all were allowed to wander as they chose, through cells, corridors and yard. After six they were forbidden to leave their cells. The weak, good-natured governor, who let them do as they pleased, went in as much fear as they did of inspections, or of visits from the Governor-General of East Siberia, whose appearance usually ended in a tightening-up of regulations. While the others spent most of their time in debate, Ziuk preferred books, or when these were all read, a game of chess. He could pass his whole day sitting with an opponent at a chess-board and smoking endless cigarettes. But before these days at Irkutsk ended he was destined to fight his first battle.

One of the prisoners, engaged to a female "comrade," had the habit of visiting his fiancée every evening in her cell. One evening, while they were together, the Chief of Police entered the cell unexpectedly. In the grey half light of an autumn dusk the two had failed to notice this officer's entrance; they did not stand to attention and welcome the great man in the manner prescribed by regulations. The official was quick-tempered; he turned on the

pair with a flood of recrimination, which the lover did more than answer. He was ordered into solitary confinement. He escaped before the order could be obeyed, and took refuge in the "Common Room," where all the other prisoners were gathered. A warder arrived to lead him into a punishment cell. His comrades rose in opposition. The Chief of Police appeared in the doorway, a squad of soldiers at his heels. The authorities did not want to punish at once. They wanted to report on "conflict and punishment during a mutiny." All prisoners were ordered off into separate cells. They made stipulations: a fiery dispute arose. The Chief of Police began to storm. "You gentlemen seem to forget that I'm in authority. You're nothing but a lot of convicts. If my order is not instantly obeyed I shall have you removed. Go on, Lieutenant—" and he turned to the officer at his side. The lieutenant drew his sword and shouted "Thrash them, you fellows, so that they never forget it!" The unarmed men took cover in a corner of the room between the walls and the stove. Pilsudski was to the front of the group. Till now he had never faced the enemy expecting a real fight, he had always kept his mouth shut and set his teeth. Now the fight had come. He crouched back, ready to spring. The nearest soldier grounded his rifle; instead of a bayonet Ziuk's eyes met only the iron-bound rifle-butt. The soldier lifted his rifle like a hammer. Pilsudski felt the blow—a darting pain in his head. Blood poured into his eyes, his mouth, his ears: he staggered. The tradition of generations rose within him. He, Josef Pilsudski, a Polish noble, forced to let himself be touched by this sottish, barbarian lout!—He, the descendant of free Lithuanian princes! His pride, his sense of adventure, sprang to life. A soldier came at him with his rifle-butt—a flat-nosed giant with little beaver's eyes,

huge paws like a bear, a neck which threatened to burst his collar—and struck home between eyes and mouth. Fresh blood streamed. Pilsudski slipped in the shambles.

The officer turned to them: he had suddenly become anxious lest any prisoner should be killed before being given up at his destination. He shouted at the soldier: "Isn't that enough, you damned idiot?"

The Kalmuck beast with the beaver's eyes and flaxen mop drew back; he gaped in amazement, pushed aside his forage cap and scratched.

What was he to do? First they tell you to lam out, and then, when you do, it's too much. Undecided, he looked down at the enemy "buntowtchik" [1] and saw this boy with the thin, suffering face and dark eyes behind this streaming red like two black hollows.

"He's a man, same as I am."

He decided to be kind to the prisoner. He would clean away this ugly blood. He rubbed the sleeve of his coarse tunic down across Pilsudski's face. But the wounded man felt only the rough cloth rasping across his open wounds —started up, and fell again, too weak. The soldier hauled him to his feet, and half-led, half-carried him out of the cell. By this time he had quite forgotten that he held in his arms a rebel "Polyak." "Just a boy—might be a kid," was the thought behind the Kalmuck forehead. Besides, weren't they both equally afraid of the Chief of Police, that twister, that blood-sucker? What did he care for this Poland or their politics? And he said "Come on, lad, you know it doesn't pay you to turn nasty. Poor kid, why, you're as weak as water." He led the boy away into an empty cell, where it was quiet and there was no smell of blood. He laid Pilsudski down as though he were a com-

[1] Agitator.

rade. "Why should I fight the likes of you—why, you're just the same as we are."

From behind a veil of hazy impressions, and tearing pain in his head, Pilsudski dimly heard the soldier's words, and felt that, somewhere, a human being was speaking whose uniform the darkness hid. A human being—a "man like him." The image faded. He smelt the reek of blood, felt horribly sick. Everything vanished. Who was it spoke? "A man like him." He tried to stand. . . . So this was how this idiots' fight was to end! A fight with "a man like him."—Like him? Absurd! "Like him—" what did that mean? All that was nothing but the socialistic claptrap of Petersburg. He refused to be bullied into vapourings about brotherhood with Russian peasants and soldiers —soldiers who had beaten him half to death! Louts!

The prisoners were accused of armed resistance to the authorities. Pilsudski, with the others, was sentenced to six months' hard labour, to be served in Siberia.

He had plenty of leisure, through the long, Siberian evenings, to meditate on the folly of the mutiny and fight at Irkutsk. Was not this the physical punishment he must bear, that the measure of his hate might overflow? And had not this unarmed battle most necessarily ended in defeat, since it was fought against his faith, against his nature? It was not for him to use his fists as though he were a porter or a peasant. He was born for fighting, but his fight was of a different kind. He would use subtler weapons, weapons of which the enemy had no inkling. This had been merely fighting for fighting's sake. War was nothing but a means. Only fools see it as an end.

But most important of all, he must never, in the heat of youth, like the babblers in Warsaw and Petersburg, lose sight either of end or means. His strength must be re-

served. With the bloody intermezzo of Irkutsk ended Josef Pilsudski's first youth.

3

Five long years in Siberia followed. The very severe climate on the Lena,—where often for months at a stretch the temperature never rose above 40 below zero,—in addition to his six months' hard labour, had served to undermine Pilsudski's health. The authorities saw the necessity for sending him to a less rigorous country. He was transferred to Tunka, where he served out his remaining Siberian exile.

His seriousness grew. Sternness and reserve became apparent. He was slim and of middle height. His forehead wide and high, divided from his other features by the energetic curves of thick, strong brows. Deepset eyes; eyes not noticeably large, but extraordinarily vivid and acute, which seemed to dominate the whole face. At times they were clear and grey, they could deepen to steel, to blue even. These eyes, when he spoke, were hidden beneath the shadow of these brows. He would rivet his eyes on the eyes of another man. The sharpness of his glance could compel the other to look away. Though his very conviction was enough in itself to compel most people to his side, predominance, when he spoke, was his completely. Those of his associates who had failed to perceive this singular personality gave him their attention as soon as he began to speak.

As a rule he might seem distant and withdrawn, but all this would completely change if his mood were good or he wanted to win someone to his side. The most charming smile would play around his lips, set off by their black

moustache, and his deep voice take on such tones of friendliness and warmth as few had power to resist. He could become gracious, full of courtesy. The fact that he was a noble in this revolutionary society intensified his natural glamour.

The Tunka days were long and monotonous. As a rule it was difficult to get through half of them. Evenings were spent in endless political debates, round an old, dinted brass samovar, which furnished innumerable glasses of tea. They talked of the past and the future: scarcely at all of the present. As a rule Pilsudski listened. But if ever he joined the debate he would scarcely allow an interruption, but talk on, sometimes for hours.

In the warm season he often hunted; he would pass many hours alone with nature, with trees and sky. The country was grim and hard: for six months in the year there was no sunshine; in the three summer months daylight was almost perpetual. He had leisure to turn to the study of the world about him. His school-days had been filled with other things than solitude and nature. For the first time, here, he was free to lose himself in her voices—not from any special love for natural things, but because observation was his passion. In prison he had observed with interest his warders and fellows, the officials: here he gave himself up to the varied earth. He kept it always carefully before him that each force of Nature and environment stood in some kind of relation with himself; each must be tested and spied. Every instant of life, for him, held surprises, sudden expectations. So he was alert to gauge the strength of an opponent. The opponent need not necessarily be an enemy, it was enough that he should present a force with which he might in some way be connected, with which, therefore, he had to reckon. These

testings of alien limitations caused him to take pleasure in hunting. Routing out, the fixing and tracing of a scent, snufflings and drawings off, the lift of a dog's head, his tension and excitement, the arch of his back, the set of his ears, his slinking movement, his courage—all enticed into a study in which he found it pleasant to lose himself. And just as in hunting he found pleasure, or in studying on long walks the wind, the river and grasses, so, too, he loved to sit for half the day at a chess-board, not merely to gauge his adversary's strength and ideas, but to discern the rules of fortune. And he strove at cards not only to learn his partner's character, but to know the very laws and whims of fate.

He missed women less than the other prisoners. He had lived out his sensuality till now rather through the intensity of his being, in the passion he could infuse into all things, than in actual feminine contacts.

Personal sensibilities had never had much share in his composition. Thanks to his natural disposition he accustomed himself more and more to seeing human beings as means, never as ends in themselves. This tendency was only re-enforced by the taming of his sensual urge. Conscious of the small part such feelings played within him, he could scarcely avoid a belief in his pre-eminence, as he watched the vacillating passions of other men, stood witness to all the difficult moments which seemed to be part of the emotional world of so many of his friends. Were not men at all times to be despised? But he was too prudent to express this feeling of self-mastery.

His five Siberian years made Pilsudski completely a man. They did more than help him to moral and intellectual certainties, they formed a period of rest, of inward recollection, during which he could store up in himself forces

that no ordinary active life would ever have given him. Fate had come to his aid at a moment when his ambition was greater than his power to realize; when he had fumbled without direction. She had forced him to passivity and rest, demanding of him that he assemble his strength and ripen.

When, after seven years in the horrible Schlüsselberg fortress, Bronislaw Szwarce, the revolutionary, a veteran of 1863, was sent to Tunka, Pilsudski, in contact with this seasoned and still enthusiastic rebel, came again under the spell of socialist ideas.

The honesty and sincerity of Szwarce were bound to make an impression on Pilsudski. Moreover, this was no longer Russian socialism, but the more comprehensive socialism of the west. After Dostoievsky, Turgeniev, Tolstoy, and an unsatisfying reading of Spencer, he returned with a fresh mind to the writings of Karl Marx.

Even now, however, he refused to let himself be captivated by utopias of universal brotherhood, and set Polish independence before himself as the highest law of Polish socialism. Only in a free country could the people affirm their rights. He could see with increasing clarity the duties and the inevitable trend of the movement. The masses must be shaken from sleep, that the whole national consciousness might be roused. Socialism, more than any other party, had the people, the workmen especially, on its side. It was necessary, therefore, to use it. These masses could only be fired to patriotism if one knew how to ally this ideal to more personal ends—the wage-scale, the length of the working day. The national problem must be presented as though it were insoluble without economic reform. Financial expansion, progress, could only be arrived at among an autonomous people. For so long as the Polish

proletariat were ruled and enslaved from the same barbarian height as the Russian, there could be no hope of any betterment. National independence, therefore, was closely bound up with socialism. From the moment he became conscious of this he was already, in his mind, a socialist.

It had needed the long Siberian evenings, the many conversations with Szwarce, it had needed rest and solitude to give this perception full clarity. Five years of Siberian seclusion had been necessary to change ignorant romanticism into definite schemes and possibilities.

In after years, no doubt, when Ziuk remembered Siberia, hateful images would rise of Irkutsk and various prisons. Doubtless he would rage at the sight of a Russian soldier's uniform.

But gratitude and melancholy always had some share in his Siberian memories; memories of the land which had brought him to ripened manhood, to clear vision, solitary peace, the most perfect peace he was to know.

His first Siberian thoughts would linger about that landscape the country had stretched around him; long Siberian winter nights, people among whom his days were spent; wild things he had hunted, trees whose names Siberia had taught him; scents he had breathed in—he remembered the evenings spent at chess, which had killed so many weary hours; the colours of Siberian skies; the icy mists which, over fields, rose after sundown, to mingle with Siberian night.

CHAPTER III

COMRADE VIKTOR

I

When, towards the end of 1892, Pilsudski, free once more, went back to Vilna, he decided, without further delay, to throw in his lot with socialism. He intended to develop it in the direction his Siberian meditations had revealed. Socialism in Poland was to clear the ground for restored political liberty.

But not only he had ripened in the course of these Siberian years. Polish revolutionaries had also, in the meantime, learnt much. They had become conscious of necessities which Pilsudski's ideas in part included.

Socialism was no new movement among Poles. Its pioneers lived abroad rather than in Poland. Their country's difficult situation, the savage persecutions which rendered abortive every attempt at more enlightened politics, had impeded all political action. Lovers of freedom—many of Poland's most intellectual citizens—lived abroad after the 1830 rebellion. They had been driven into exile by the brutal repression which followed. France, England, Switzerland were the refuge of these emigrants. Polish socialism, therefore, had had its first beginning abroad. This early socialism was more literary and romantic than political. It expressed itself chiefly in creeds, tinged very strongly with mysticism. The glamorous idea of Poland's Messianic election, of the special tasks devolving on their

country, chosen out for martyrdom among the peoples of Europe, obsessed these minds. This left little room for realities. Everything connected with their distant home was set in a dramatic light. Chains, freedom, flames, white eagles, the sanctity of the Messianic idea, formed the daily vocabulary of these idealistic, usually unpractical folk. Adam Mickiewicz and Lelewel the historian-patriot, were the centres of this spiritual migration. The first distinctly socialist organizations to be founded on practical lines were in Galicia, mostly in Lemberg. No socialism was possible either among Russian, so-called "Congress," Poles, or in German Poland. Working men's clubs were formed in Lemberg where the first socialist newspapers appeared. In "Congress" Poland socialist doctrine was illegal, and had to be secretly preached. Here, in 1882, the secret organization "Proletariat" was founded by Warynski. The general public heard little of the existence of this new movement till, in 1880, in Cracow, socialist leaders were arrested for "international conspiracy." At Warynski's side in the dock stood one of the most notable Polish socialists—Stanislaw Mendelson.

These prisoners were acquitted: this meant a notable victory and a great influx of members. Now, even through "Congress" Poland, socialism spread very rapidly. Workers apart, students became its most zealous adherents. "Proletariat" first realized the romantic notion of a brotherhood of workers and intellectuals. Polish socialists got into touch with their Russian comrades who had organized the "Norodnaja Vola" ("People's Will"). In the meantime the doctrine spread through every smaller town containing workmen. By means of espionage, by bribery, arrest, and deportations the Russian authorities did their best to stamp out the whole new movement. But not be-

fore 1885 did they manage to lay their hands on any notable leaders or deal at "Proletariat" their first serious blows.

In this year, in December, Hurko, the Governor-General of Warsaw, published a decree condemning most of the arrested socialists to long terms of imprisonment, penal servitude or exile. And four were sentenced to be hanged. On January 28, 1886 these leaders were executed on the Citadel Hill in Warsaw. This day was kept as a day of mourning by the whole Polish working class.

The savage persecutions to which socialists in "Congress" Poland were subjected made further development impossible. Leaders who escaped hanging, who neither perished like Warynski in Siberia, nor died miserably in the Schlüsselberg fortress, fled to less perilous lands.

But in Germany, too, things became too hot for Polish socialists. Several among them had lived since 1880 in Posen in order to keep in touch with German comrades. They were arrested by the police and delivered to the Russian authorities. It was necessary to emigrate farther west. Switzerland and Paris, to begin with, were these exiles' first objectives.

On November 21, 1892, delegates from every Polish group attended a Paris Congress and decided to found a socialist party. Several months later, in the March of 1893, the P.P.S.—Polska Partja Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist party)—established itself in Warsaw.

A divided opinion, even among the working class, became apparent when several existing socialist groups refused to join the P.P.S. It grew, nevertheless, from that day on, into Poland's most influential socialist organization—the one that embraced the greatest number of advanced activities in the country. Thanks to such leaders

as Mendelson and Pilsudski, Polish Independence formed the first item on its programme.

Since Polish socialism was bound up from the very beginning with the socialism of other countries, and since, sooner or later, every party leader had to control it from abroad, it was essential to keep in touch with foreign socialists.

Western socialists, in most countries, scarcely troubled about the Polish question. In vain their Polish colleagues made every effort to persuade them to put this question on agenda. Most foreign socialist leaders, however, declared Polish claims fully justified. Marx himself was one of the most ardent supporters of the idea of an independent Poland. Bebel and Engels declared for Polish freedom, and Liebknecht, the veteran of 1848, remained till the day of his death a staunch champion of the Polish cause.

Only in later years did Poland cease to interest German socialists. Socialists in France made scarcely any attempt to give active proof of their country's "traditional sympathy," and in general expressed no opinion.

First principles for a programme of self-determination of peoples were originally the work of Poles. At their London congress in 1886 these socialists laid the foundations from which years later every other country was to build. Polish socialism did not confine itself to Europe; it soon spread to the United States. At Newark, in 1894, some emigrant Poles founded their own socialist party, which declared itself fully in sympathy with the party aims of American socialism, and the programme of the P.P.S. On parallel lines, under the leadership of the Jewish journalist, B. Feigenbaum, a Jewish organization sprang up which had as its object the supplying of the P.P.S. in

Poland with socialist literature printed in Yiddish for propaganda purposes.

London, however, became the most important field of action. Alliance had been established between Russia and such countries as France, Germany and Switzerland. This made it possible for Russian embassies to bring pressure to bear on the police of any country to which Russian representatives were accredited. The Quay d'Orsay was willing to act on almost any "suggestion" made from the Russian Embassy with regard to the presence in Paris of inconvenient Polish elements. When the authorities forbade further sojourn nothing remained to Polish socialists but to fly Paris, Brussels or Switzerland. England was the one European power who refused to be so far swayed by any consideration of foreign policy as to set aside the laws of hospitality. This mighty land could afford to shelter even the most notorious revolutionaries. England felt it inconsistent with her dignity as a great, free and civilized power, to shut her gates against weak and defenceless strangers. Thus England came to stand for freedom, and London to be the Mecca of every political exile. These men, often escaped prisoners, at war with the whole existing social order, would refrain in England, in proof of their admiration for this standpoint, from any preaching of anarchist or revolutionary doctrine. In England they made mental concessions directly in contradiction to their ethical and political creed.

Polish socialists also turned Londonwards, as authorities elsewhere, in eager subservience to the Imperial government of the Czar, began to grow more and more hostile. These Poles in London formed a group round the offices of their newspaper "Aurore" (Przedswit)—a paper which first appeared on the 5th of August 1881, as a

reconstruction, under the editorship of Stanislaw Mendelson, of "Equality" published at Geneva.

A shabby little house, No. 7, Beaumont Square, Mile End, did duty as office, printing-room and private residence of the editor. He acted as proof-reader, commercial manager and head typographer in addition to editorial duties. In the course of the twenty-two years during which "Aurore" appeared in London, the English capital was visited by almost every leader of Polish socialism. Future presidents of the Polish Republic like Wojciechowski or Moscicki, future Cabinet Ministers like Wasilewski, the notabilities, diplomats and generals of free Poland, have all at one time or another worked in the little house in Beaumont Square.

Their life was hard and demanded continual sacrifice. The movement was very poor. The P.P.S. could only afford the smallest salaries to its members engaged abroad. Leon Wasilewski, who, twenty years later, was to be the first Foreign Minister for Poland, was paid four pounds a month as editor. This included the services of his wife, who worked with him as secretary and proof-reader. Treatises of popular science, pamphlets for peasants, etc., additional socialist literature equally vital to the movement but which could not be printed in "Congress" Poland, were set up in the "Aurore's" office and despatched to Poland for distribution. Here, too, were to be dreamed most dreams of liberty. Ideas of the coming struggle were to work out their way towards realization.

This tiny Polish colony, which laboured in self-denial and poverty often for fifteen hours a day in Beaumont Square, was fully alive to English hospitality. Everyone was scrupulous to avoid, even in trifles, all appearance of taking advantage of it. Most, for this reason kept at a

distance from England and English life. Though many of these Poles had read Shakespeare, Byron and Spenser in the original, they had not the leisure to perfect themselves in spoken English. So they remained aloof, mixing only with the more intelligent Polish workmen who carried on their trades in London. Neither did they frequent English socialists. These Polish conspirators had not much sympathy for English socialism. Their own ideals were not marxist, were national far rather than international, and aspired above all else to an Independent Polish Republic. To these men, this one aim seemed so supreme that they saw every world-event in the light of the Polish question. Politics in other lands were of interest only in so far as they had bearing on Russia or Poland. Countries were divided into those which could, or could not, help the Polish State into being. Any power antagonistic to Russia came logically into the first category. England had no love for Russia, and it was natural enough that the sympathies of Polish emigrants should all be on England's side. In England they saw the one force strong enough to bring Russia's downfall. Everything, therefore, which could bring power to this mighty "ally" was set in a favourable light. Whoever strengthened England would strengthen Poland's chances of freedom; whoever was against her was Poland's enemy. "Aurore" took this attitude even towards English domestic politics. Polish socialists sided with the Conservatives and opposed the Liberal party. Since Disraeli, the Russo-Turkish War and the Berlin Congress, Conservatives had shown mistrust of Russia. For reasons of opposition the Liberals therefore were more favourable to her. English socialism in those days was still very weak, and on foreign affairs it could scarcely take an independent stand. It joined forces, as a rule, with the Liberals. So

Polish socialists were even out of sympathy with Labour. They suspected any influence likely to weaken England, "the great ally." The attitude in Beaumont Square towards the Irish question had become almost paradoxical. Poland, from end to end, sympathized very deeply with the Irish. Ireland's struggle for freedom seemed in many ways so similar to Poland's. It was impossible not to see in Ireland a companion in misfortune with every claim to sympathy. These bonds were still further strengthened by Roman Catholicism, the common creed. Ireland was loved and pitied. Yet even on the Irish question London Poles, more realistically minded, held less sentimental views. Since Ireland's struggle with England might tend to weaken the "great ally," their attitude was not particularly cordial.

2

In spite of all his family's efforts to procure him some post with the prospects of a future career, Pilsudski, on his return, gave himself up at once to politics, without further thoughts of any professional short cut.

He went to Warsaw and got into touch with socialist party leaders. He was more determined and had had more time for reflection than any of the other socialists. Though Pilsudski was to some extent a straggler, since party organization had chiefly been the work of Stanislaw Mendelson, he very soon came to be regarded as the real builder up of the party. To fanatical will for national freedom he joined all the singleness of purpose demanded by such a cause. His were the determined personality, the glowing belief in a mission. Such faith as his could lift into heroic regions an ideal common to all.

He formed a magnetic centre, gathering in the thousand-fold energies of a whole undecided mass. To the herd's indifference and deficiencies he opposed his white-hot faith. Who more capable than he of holding before the crowd's unconscious sloth a symbol of united strength? The tense power expressed in his whole being drew towards him the flood-tide of undirected popular energies, gathering them in to concentration. His plastic strength had welded in a single personality every new idea which, vaguely, in the past, had floated through the national consciousness. Embodied in him these dreams took shape as realities.

And even although this new movement had not been founded by him, it was by no means without significance that he should be acclaimed its true creator. It seemed as if the aura of martyrdom with which he was already invested predestined him to raise high the standard of liberty over every battle of the future. At first he was no more than a Lithuanian delegate: soon his name came to stand for everything which identified socialism with heroic and racial tasks. He was unknown to the mass of socialists and workers. He displayed from the first the greatest caution, associating only with those party members in whom he could entirely trust.

To many of his colleagues he was only known as "Viktor," his party pseudonym. Popularity might be dangerous. In the ranks of socialists, even, government had its tools and spies. Once arrested, one could be sure of exile to Siberia, of imprisonment for many years. For Pilsudski, an ex-convict, the police held very special dangers. Because of these he mixed as little as possible with other members of the party. With workers among whom was carried on the principal business of enlightenment he

avoided all direct contact. He gave himself up entirely to organization, which afforded him the greatest security, from a hiding-place known to very few.

Work demanding secrecy and discretion seemed particularly suited to his nature. His character was in reality very simple, though strangers got a different impression. He was primitive because impulsive, though he may often have seemed exceptionally complex. He thought to one end; the logical working out of each impression furnished by his instinct and feeling. Only emotion inspired him; he could never conceive through thought alone. And to thought, even, he would give himself up with sullen passion far more akin to feeling. Intellect was a secondary matter. He would seek within himself in any uncertainty and follow his intuitive impulse. He re-acted passionately to life. He would allow his action to be guided by a first deep instinct, with which, in every later decision, he did his best to be consistent. Since every impulse was so vital, his reactions to life were those of a fighter. When he witnessed any injustice an instant voice would rise within him demanding compensation and punishment. The law must be broken if there were no legal way. Complicated intellectual solutions hold few attractions for conspirators, and they are far more directly moved by wrongs, either social or national, than the men who fight with other weapons. The rebel sees only one way, punishment—even if this should mean destruction. Only the primitive attempts to change a whole social order by means of bombs, direct attack and slaughter. Doubtless, if these succeed, their method is the swiftest and the surest. Other paths, perhaps, longer, no doubt, and more circuitous, can still lead on to justice. But the fighter's passion in Pilsudski drove him down the rough ways of conspiracy. Bombs

for him were no more reprehensible, as means, than were eternally drawn out negotiations.

To the sheer business of secrecy he brought more than ordinary talent. Illegal socialism had become his inevitable fighting ground, just as he himself seemed chosen as symbol for the whole new movement.

"Comrade Viktor" rose nearer and nearer the highest ranks of the party. His activities were not confined to "Congress" Poland. As organizer he made many journeys into German and Austrian Poland—into Russia and countries abroad. Though as a rule they were full of work and care, Pilsudski would regard these trips as holidays. Foreigners and foreign lands presented no special attractions. Neither in London in 1896, when he came to attend the Socialist Congress, nor two years later on a holiday, did he get into contact with Englishmen. His restless craving to be active drove him on and on in search of work. In London most of his time was spent in going through a memorandum divulging Russia's Polish intentions, which Polish socialists had managed to purloin from the Governor-General's office in Warsaw. While the "Times" and "Manchester Guardian" were publishing this sensational document, Viktor sat in the printing-room at the "Aurore" office, preparing a Polish edition.

By this time he was married—to Maria Juszkiewicz, a widow. His wife, as he did, devoted her life to the work of organized conspiracy, to meetings and socialist debate. She idolized him and saw in him the hero, whom more than once by her faith, her zealous devotion, she had managed to aid in his task. She would come to his assistance whenever, in conversation or debate, she saw him in any danger of defeat from the wider knowledge of an opponent.

Her sharp wit, her usually very trenchant ridicule,

could turn the edge of every hostile argument or assertion. Before her fell the most solidly grounded opposition. Pilsudski was grateful, more especially so since Mme. Pilsudski, though older than her husband, was known to party friends by a name to which she had every right—"the beautiful lady."

If Pilsudski's marriage did not bring him the completest happiness, this was because his wife could bear no children.

3

Newspapers for the mass-diffusion of ideas on socialism and Polish freedom formed one important channel of P.P.S. propaganda. Till 1884 the movement had had to content itself with news-sheets, printed abroad and smuggled into Poland. These were often out of date by the time they reached the Polish reader. Many questions of vital concern to Polish workers could not be discussed in them. The foundation of a newspaper to educate public feeling meant for Pilsudski the first step towards realization of his Siberian ideas. It is thanks to his initiative that on July 12, 1894, the original number appeared of his own socialist newspaper "The Worker," printed and distributed in Poland. Pilsudski's talent for secrecy found in this paper its earliest chance of being effectively exercised. Till now his work had brought him into touch with no realities. His activities had been mere longings. Now words would give him the chance to be effective. Pilsudski was clear-headed. He was as much aware as every other realist in the movement how unripe the time was for anything concrete. Battle was still many years ahead. It was a question of clarifying issues. This could best be done in printed words. Through words an impulse could

be shaped till the time for action should have arrived. And for this reason, also, he loved speaking. Through speech he could shape each instinct. "The Worker," of which he would write the greater part, was, therefore, to be made to serve two ends. It was to arouse the masses, and give him opportunities to perceive. As years went by it became his means of communication—the bridge between his first intuitive strategic concept and its gradual working out into action. He was patient. He knew that years were not too long to realize what his instinct had shown.

Apart from this he was naturally well equipped for such work. He had never aspired to open participations. Early projects of escapades had been carried out by his brothers and sisters: later, at school, other boys had taken greater part in every discussion. The affair at Irkutsk had made him realize that for him it was senseless to be active in any battle. Now, he refrained from open fight. His true bent lay in the secret leadership of men, in guiding them and moulding them to his will. What better means to this than a newspaper?

It needed no ordinary courage to print socialist propaganda in this land of censorship, perfected espionage and terrorism. Only the very greatest foresight, boundless devotion to a cause, a genuine talent for conspiracy, could make such action possible. It was decided to print "The Worker" in some corner of the provinces. A variety of obstacles made it necessary to transfer the press to Vilna, where Pilsudski and Wojciechowski wrote the paper. As time went on it became apparent that Vilna was too far from any industrial centre. "The Worker" was moved to Lodz, the largest manufacturing town in the country. Lodz swarmed with government agents. The existence of a secret printing-press and a socialist news-sheet printed

in Poland had long made the authorities uneasy. But in spite of bribes, of arrests and innumerable spies, the Russians never managed to find the press. The socialist party was very proud of having managed, in the den of the lion, to bring out its own newspaper. "The Worker" was read by the whole working class; it was passed from hand to hand as reverently as a sacred relic. Each number was an event. Even such political opponents as the National Democrats were obliged to congratulate the P.P.S. on its triumph.

When in 1899 the paper was about to move to Lodz and editorship became unusually dangerous Pilsudski decided to go on working alone. "The Worker" was the movement's chief activity. In his talents for secret organization the party had special trust. In addition to writing most of the articles, editorship entailed the securing of foreign correspondents; it was necessary to know every detail of organization and to correct proofs; the copies had to be printed, packed and smuggled out to different centres. Only the best brains in the movement could be entrusted with such work. Pilsudski, from now on, made up his mind to perform the gigantic task alone, depending only on the services of one assistant. No one but himself was to have any influence on the paper. He felt more convinced than ever that he had special duties to fulfil. His years of socialist activity had served to reaffirm this belief. Latest developments had shown him that the destiny of his people, of the whole movement for autonomy, could only be reached by roads which Siberia had revealed to him as the right ones. Every event seemed the realization of a first intuitive vision. Though many comrades saw in him a notable representative of the movement, he, even more than they, knew himself its truest symbol. It seemed

almost to go without saying that he should be identical with the whole. This profound conviction made him intolerant of collaborators. He scarcely permitted now the division of authority, power, direction. He preferred to work early and late. In this way alone could he be certain that everything would be done precisely as he had seen it in his mind.

The chief difficulty in transferring the paper to Lodz was to discover premises where the work could be carried on without fear of arousing suspicion. Pilsudski took neither office nor workshop, but an ordinary, small flat, in which he lived with Mme. Maria. Four rooms and a kitchen made up the premises. Printing and editing were done in the largest of the rooms, known to outsiders as "the study." It led out of a tiny drawing-room. It was essential that the room should betray nothing of the purpose to which it was put. No single piece of furniture must look unusual. The little printing-press was hidden in a cupboard; paper in an ottoman. The cheap type was kept in a cabinet-drawer. Since there were not enough duplicate letters many words could not be used in the articles.

Before the day began it was the duty of Pilsudski's assistant to go into the printing-room and clear up everything. The maid, when she came in to dust, must be given no hint of the work of the night before. It was Maria Pilsudski's duty to help her tidy up the study and prevent her from suspecting the contents of any papers scattered about the writing table. Master had given orders that only the mistress should touch his desk, otherwise he would never find anything. Though it was part of the socialist tradition to engage only "comrades" as one's servants, Pilsudski preferred an ordinary maid, who would not be

compelled to dangerous pretences with the concierge or servants in other flats. But this meant constant vigilance, even in one's own home. They must be pleasant, but not too kind, to the girl; allow her the right number of free evenings; keep the printing-room carefully guarded without ever appearing to do so. They had, in short, to tread continually the dangerous middle path of prudence, lay no undue stress on anything, and exercise real talent for conspiracy.

The paper was made up of twelve sheets. An edition of 1990 copies was the work of sixteen days. It had all to be done on a little English press of the type used abroad for small advertisements. It would have been impossible in a private flat to set up a larger machine. As it was, the tiny press—it weighed scarcely more than 300 pounds —made every change of abode strategic. The machine had to be taken to bits, its parts stowed away in laundry bags, among clothes, in bedding, hat-boxes and shoes. The press had continually to be oiled to prevent the noise of machinery being heard in the adjoining room. Any part which clanged against another had to be covered with strips of leather, felt or cloth. The drawing of single sheets was the most dangerous part of all this business. It was never possible, even with the greatest care, entirely to prevent incessant rustling. The greatest efforts, therefore, had to be made to keep the servant as far as possible from the "study." In the morning, as she dusted the drawing-room, it fell to Maria Pilsudski to help the two printers "through the wall." Whenever the next room grew so noisy that there was danger of arousing the maid's suspicions, Mme. Pilsudski would sing some tune loud enough to cover the sound of printing. Her voice would warn the two men to work more carefully. Songs from the drawing-

room meant curses from the printers next door. They were answered with more oil and strips of felt. Actual printing was not the only difficulty, and by no means the most exasperating. Proof-cutting, since all the paper had to be smuggled from abroad in stock sizes, would give rise to further complications. Galley proofs as they came from the press had to be cut with an ordinary knife, at the cost, every time, of bruised hands. To prevent the servant's finding any trace, waste paper had to be burnt in the stove, which could never be lighted till the evening when she was allowed to go out. Editorship also had its difficulties. In printing the paper it was necessary to start with the middle pages. Since an edition took several weeks to complete the front sheets had to be left blank for the latest news. Leader-writing on a paper whose middle sheets were already in print and could therefore not be touched again, was the severest test of Pilsudski's journalistic ability. When, after sixteen nerve-racked days a number was ready at last, it was stowed away in plain trunks and suitcases. Armed with these, Pilsudski and his assistant would set out to the various distributing centres. The latest number at times would necessitate a journey into Warsaw, where most of the copies were delivered. A walk down the platform under the eyes of police-spies and gendarmes was the culmination of a fortnight's racking work.

While his assistant, as a rule, was light-hearted and took things as easily as possible, Pilsudski was usually silent. The work had to be done; no one could do it better than he. But it often needed an effort to keep him at his desk beside the printing-press. He had grown restless. Six years' journalism, six years in which words were the only deeds seemed long, even to him. Should not preparation for the fight be more active? Though outwardly at peace and

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given up entirely to his work, he had at times to make an effort and force back his attention on to the paper. It seemed as though some other part of his strength were willing him in another direction. Was it to be his fate to end his days between desk and printing-press in a carefully guarded editor's room? He was thirty-two already. His restlessness could scarcely be concealed.

The end came. It came on the 21st of February 1901 in the person of a Russian cavalry captain and a squad of troops. The press had been discovered by accident. In the machine lay a number almost ready. The officer and men examined with curious eyes. Had not this iron toy been one of the nightmares of every gendarme, of police authorities, of the Governor-General of Warsaw? A nightmare and their fondest dream. The discovery of this little press would mean this officer's career, the careers of his superiors and subordinates. Yet here they stood before a small machine—so retiring, so unobtrusive, so modest! For years now it had been cursed as an enemy monster. The captain examined the title page of the latest number. He read:

"The Worker." No. 36. Feb. 25th 1901. Then came the leader heading—"The Triumph of Free Speech"—and further down—

"Orlov, Chief of Police to the Czar Nicolas I, was walking one day with a friend who intended a journey to Nuremberg. 'I want to ask you a favour,' he said. 'When you get to Nuremberg have a look at Gutenberg's statue and spit in its face from me. He invented printing. It's he who's responsible for everything bad in the world.' "

The captain could not refrain from saying, as he turned to Pilsudski: "So this is where your Gutenbergs lead you.

Surely you'll admit now that everything bad comes from them."

The printing-press, a loved and detested abortion, was reverently packed and sealed by gendarmes. Pilsudski stood with bitten lips, his forehead deeply scarred, his eyebrows drawn very close, watching "The Worker's" end.

The end—of everything: of hope, of work, of enlightenment—the end of preparation for freedom. Grief filled his mind, but with it a curious peace. Not fear. What was to happen? Prison? Siberia? How many years more of suffering? While all around him seemed in agitation, while even the police looked as excited as if they had arrested the whole Polish movement, he alone felt perfectly calm. He, the restless, the feverish, the unquiet, had only silence within him. Darkness hid the room and hid the world.

It was as though a life were over—with its fears, its expectations and its hopes.

Josef Pilsudski was at peace as the gendarmes led him away.

CHAPTER IV

ASYLUM OF ST. NICOLAS

I

VIKTOR'S arrest caused as much sensation in the ranks of the P.P.S. as among the Russian authorities. The Russians felt that by the arrest of this leader they had managed to throttle the movement and "The Worker" in one. But the new number was out in a few weeks. New editors and press had come into being immediately.

In the party itself the difficulties were more acute. To begin with, panic reigned. It was as though the movement had been strangled. Viktor's popularity, the devotion he had won, became apparent. A legend had grown round him irresistibly. It had made his personality the most glamorous in all the party. His secret activities, his reserve, his appearances—rare and usually sudden—among party leaders, had produced a crop of rumours. He was a hero worshipped by everyone alive to the romance of secret politics. Special store was set on his fanatical devotion to Polish freedom. He had been willing to sacrifice everything—his closest friends, even—unconditionally to that one object. For him rebellion, the national struggle, were a vocation as well as a career; and this vocation had something uncanny in it.

The loss of such a leader was too grave for the party to make no effort to free him. He must be rescued, or it

went without saying that after several years in Polish gaols he would receive the heaviest legal sentence—eight years' penal servitude. To the P.P.S. the thought of such destruction was intolerable. His work could not be spared for eight years.

The authorities were well aware that the arrest had been exceptionally important. It meant certain promotion to a number of officials of all grades. It would have been too dangerous to leave so distinguished a prisoner in Lodz gaol. He must be moved somewhere safer.

After two months at Lodz he was transferred to "Pavilion X" in the Warsaw Citadel. This transfer to "Pavilion X" came as a blow to the movement. "Pavilion X" was historical; political prisoners were held there, and in this wing had languished most pioneers of Polish freedom. To rescue their leader from such a fortress was impossible. The one thing left was to attempt to procure his transfer to some less impregnable gaol. This could only happen if "Viktor" were to be taken so ill as to necessitate his transfer to hospital. It was decided that the prisoner must go mad. A friendly doctor wrote out the most detailed instructions for the future patient's behaviour.

It remained to communicate the party's plan. "Prisoners' Aid," a special branch of party organization, had managed in other prisons to keep in touch with prisoners by means of letters baked into bread, special marks on washing and smuggled newspapers. In the case of the Citadel, whose inmates were cut off from all communication, such ordinary methods could not be used.

But there was an alternative, which the prison authorities would have been the very last to suspect—a dove came to the rescue.

This dove was a warder, Alexei Siedielnikov, a white-

haired man with a pleasant smile and friendly blue eyes. He was one of those exceptional Russian officials whose work inspired them to vague and kindly philanthropies: he professed a mild and simple Christianity; had shaped a code of sentimental ethics which he hoped would smooth his path to heavenly bliss. This gentle soul was much perturbed by the contradiction between his own Christian tenets and the conditions of his occupation. In his sensitive spirit their conflict had set up a nervous tension. He was married to a Russianized Pole, and for more than twenty years had held the same post at the Citadel. In front of his quarters there was a grass plot, on which he could keep a dappled cow, a cock and a few hens, grow purple pansies and fuchsias well into late October. He sold the prisoners eggs and milk, secretly and for very small sums.

Siedielnikov had all the astonished admiration for daring political prisoners surrounded with the halo of adventure of the small bourgeois who only knows his own little world. He shed many tears over the misfortunes of these poor reprobates—tears which sprang from genuine Christian pity. Occasionally he could be persuaded to smuggle a prisoner's letters in and out. Some prisoner had nicknamed him "Carrier pigeon." Now he was called "Dove" for short.

Letters were exchanged as follows. Siedielnikov would set down a match-box on the table in a prisoner's cell. He would "forget" it. It contained the prisoner's letter. The prisoner would pocket the match-box and set another in its place in which his own letter had been hidden.

For Viktor too Siedielnikov acted as postman. Pilsudski began to go "mad" soon after his arrival at the Citadel. From week to week he received new directions for the convincing development of his illness, "psychosis hallu-

cinatoria acuta." It was decided that his special symptom should be bursts of hysterical rage at the sight of any Russian uniform. A warder had always to be present when a prisoner's food was brought to his cell. Pilsudski was instructed to refuse his food and declare that it had been polluted by the gendarme. For a time, therefore, he lived on eggs. At last even on these he began to discover curious spots and stains. He refused to touch anything cooked, would eat only chocolate and biscuits. Siedielnikov became very unhappy. For some time now his wife had cooked Viktor special food. This was of no avail; a gendarme had to watch it being served. The Siedielnikovs, in desperation, bought a book on Lithuanian cooking. His country's most appetizing dishes were prepared to tempt the prisoner, and the half-famished Viktor had to summon up all his resolution and refuse with shouts of rage the choicest Lithuanian bortsch,[1] bigos [2] or kolduny.[3] This comedy, which lasted several months, exhausted him more every day. If it went on for much longer he felt he would really go mad. How was he to keep this up? Hunger, weakness, cramp, had bent him double.

When this madness had almost used up his strength the authorities began to feel uneasy. Such a prisoner must not be allowed to get too ill. All Russia was awaiting his trial, which would bring so many promotions. Siedielnikov at once told Viktor's friends of the prison authorities' fears. It was time to act. The case was put into the hands of Dr. Ivan Sabashnikov, the head doctor of the Warsaw Asylum and one of the most distinguished Russian psychiatrists. He was a native of Siberia, whose sympathies were Si-

[1] Beetroot soup.
[2] Huntsman's stew, composed of cabbage, sausage and meat.
[3] A kind of Lithuanian haggis.

berian more than Russian. A lady, one of the "comrades," approached the distinguished doctor. A "relative" of hers in the Citadel was in danger of becoming incurable unless he could be treated by a specialist. The prison doctor would do nothing to help the patient. Sabashnikov promised to visit the Citadel if the police would grant him a permit. The Citadel authorities were delighted that the great Sabashnikov should wish to examine their prisoner. He received permission at once.

He visited Pilsudski in his cell: a horrible cell, with its broken, grey-cemented floor, walls whose original plaster had been half-effaced by grime and drip, its low iron bedstead, its pestilential, subtly pervading reek of cellar damp.

The prison doctor entered with Sabashnikov. The sight of a uniform appeared to enrage the patient. Sabashnikov turned to the doctor and asked to be alone with the prisoner. His colleague left the cell.

Sabashnikov saw at a glance how matters stood. This was a malingerer. But he was more than a clever doctor; everything human could interest him. He sat down on the sagging, cheap, iron bedstead, and began to question the patient.

For the first time in many months Pilsudski heard what seemed to be the words of a being both human and intelligent. What could be gained by keeping up this farce? At last he could drop his mask, forget his madness. The pain of the last months, the semi-darkness, the fetid prison hostility disappeared. His armour of deception fell away. All were gone—fanaticism, pretences, resolution. He talked with vivid passion, with a quality peculiar to himself which lit every facet of his theme, in a voice whose notes enchanted the listener, calling up image after image till little by little its music was the thing that mattered

most. It was his old voice, the voice that could subdue and enthrall; he smiled, his eyes gleamed or deepened to violet. He had become another man.

Sabashnikov was a scientist; his thought was straightly bound in dry precisions and terminologies. He let his mind be swept down this glowing, sinuous torrent of words. He became almost enthusiastic. Moreover he was a Siberian. Siberia, his native land, was the subject he cared for most. Pilsudski knew Siberia so well, he remembered Siberian days so pleasantly, had studied Siberia, stood lost in the forms of trees, the colours of Siberian after-glows. Before Sabashnikov there arose a whole Siberian world—it was almost there for him to touch.

The prisoner and the great psychiatrist sat side by side and talked Siberia. The pictures they evoked delighted them. They compared a common love, exchanged stories, unpicked their hearts as though they were old friends. They came nearer and nearer to each other across this bridge of unaccustomed memory Siberia and the past had built between them. Sabashnikov had forgotten professional dignity. He no longer noticed the cell, the grey, threadbare light filtering through its barred window, whose thin squares of shadow chequered the cemented floor, pointing livid hours; the sounds he heard came across the Steppes from his home. This magician had won him altogether. Who else in all these difficult professional years had shown such enthusiastic understanding of that far-off country of his? So many people belittled and despised it. He gave himself up completely to these unexpected moments of delight, and when, at the end of an hour, he said good-bye, he shook Pilsudski's hand with cordial gratitude.

A few days later the authorities of "Pavilion X" received

Dr. Sabashnikov's certificate. The prisoner's condition was serious enough to demand immediate clinical attention. His surroundings and life at the Citadel were calculated to aggravate this from day to day.

No Warsaw asylum seemed safe enough: it was decided to move Pilsudski to Petersburg. In "Pavilion X" the authorities felt relieved. This ended their responsibility. They could look forward to a speedy cure, to be followed by immediate trial. Madmen must not be allowed before their judges.

As the closed prison van went rattling over Citadel Yard on its way to the station with the prisoner Mme. Siedielnikov crossed herself. She dabbed her eyes with the corner of her blue apron. Her anxious husband stood in the doorway behind her. He murmured blessings. They were good Christian orthodox folk, who had faith in their Saviour's love for sinners and in eternal salvation.

2

In Petersburg the prisoner was lodged in the Asylum of St. Nicolas the Miracle-Worker. The party organization at once decided to free him. Headquarters at Warsaw notified their Petersburg branch to organize a rescue. This, though an honour for Polish socialists in Petersburg, was at the same time a heavy responsibility. They thought at first of placing all arrangements for escape in the hands of a Polish doctor who had long been attached to the asylum. But Pilsudski, who, by secret letters, was kept fully posted, vetoed this. Of what use was the party if its members could not organize an escape? In spite of the strain of assumed madness and almost a year's imprisonment, his habit of leadership remained. He insisted on being obeyed.

Nobody dared oppose him. A new plan of action was thought out.

The arrangements for escape were entrusted to Wladyslaw Mazurkiewicz, a student of the Academy of Medicine, and a junior member of the party.

Mazurkiewicz was about to sit for his degree. For him the party's decision meant a change in his whole career. His prospects were entirely altered. He had intended to specialize in dermatology, and was going to set up practice in Lodz, where as a doctor he would have every chance for propaganda among the workers. Suddenly he was required to abandon the thought of Lodz, throw in his lot with the Asylum and sacrifice his whole future.

He, as chief accomplice, even if the escape were to succeed, would have to leave Poland for ever. But in the grip of Pilsudski's organization even the youngest socialist had had to learn party discipline. Under his direction subordinate party members had been trained to sacrifice their interests to the cause. Mazurkiewicz abandoned dermatology and told his parents that he thought of becoming a psychiatrist. He begged his father to use his influence and obtain for him a post as house-surgeon at the Asylum of St. Nicolas. Thanks to his father's many connections, the young doctor soon managed to enter the Asylum as an assistant.

The Asylum building, vast and bleak, stood along the banks of the Mojka, a little tributary which, not much further on, flowed out into the Neva. Laundry, outhouses, doctors' and servants' quarters set behind high walls completed the premises. All doors were locked and guarded day and night. A main entrance led to the middle wing through a small, sparsely shrub-grown inner court. The administrator's office lay on the ground floor to the

left. To the right the great receiving-room; behind it a little bedroom for the use of the doctor on duty. The Asylum housed about two thousand patients, with only twelve doctors in attendance. Most of the patients were turned over to keepers and nurses, who treated them as though they were animals. The head physician was delighted to obtain the services of any new intelligent doctor.

Through the Polish doctor, who also had a hand in the plot, Pilsudski learnt of Mazurkiewicz's presence in the hospital. Mazurkiewicz himself, to avoid suspicion, intentionally went no nearer the patient. A plan of escape could not be worked out in detail till Mazurkiewicz, primed with experience, should have considered every possibility.

Mazurkiewicz knew, as early as the middle of April, that immediate flight must be arranged as soon as he had been nominated house-doctor. His duties in this capacity would give him the right to have any patient brought down for examination to the consulting ward. From there he could escape from the Asylum. There was a time of anxious waiting. Soon it would be summer. The clear Petersburg nights would add to the difficulty of escape. Immediate action would be necessary. Anxiety grew and grew. Then, in the second week in May Mazurkiewicz was informed of his nomination. The authorities requested the new doctor to take charge for the first time on May the 13th. Mazurkiewicz planned the escape for the evening of his first night duty.

On that evening the head physician was to be absent at a conference in the town. Moreover the Russian calendar reckoned May 13th as May 1st. A fair on that day was held on the "Champ de Mars," and it was a hospital

custom to grant leave of absence to attend it to most of the Asylum staff.

The 13th came. Attendants, nurses and warders besieged the inexperienced young doctor with requests for leave and exeats. He signed every application.

From day to day he had been smuggling in clothes for the prisoner, piecemeal, in a flat attaché case. Linen; a suit, —an opera hat—since no other head-gear would pack small enough. These clothes were hidden in a locker in the chemical laboratory.

It was almost evening. The Asylum stood hushed and indolent in the vanishing rays of warm May sunshine. The patients, even, seemed to share in the soft evening calm. No rattling of doors, no piercing howls from the cells of the "difficult" cases. An occasional nurse or warder went hurrying down the long corridors to an evening's enjoyment at the fair.

Mazurkiewicz had everything ready. Just as he was about to give the order to bring Pilsudski down for examination a reporter was announced from the staff of the Petersburg "Listok." Since the head physician was not available, this pressman hoped the doctor-in-charge would be kind enough to give him a short interview. He was looking for opinions on the psychology of "slashers," who, for the last few weeks, had been causing such panic in St. Petersburg. Several ladies recently had had—if one might be allowed the expression—their bellies ripped open in the street. A most curious psychological phenomenon, highly interesting, surely, to psychiatrists! Mazurkiewicz, with apparent indifference, granted the desired interview. He delivered a little lecture on the psychology which could find such exquisite pleasure slitting up, in broad daylight, the respectable bellies of Petersburg bourgeoises.

As soon as the journalist had departed Mazurkiewicz decided to act. Sudden indecision seized him as he was about to give the keeper his orders.

Each preparation had filled him with excited pride; he had longed for action.

He hesitated now and trembled inwardly. Images arose of which he had never been aware. Suddenly he remembered Lodz. Surely it was his duty to go there and help to educate the workers. Were all his hopes and plans to come to nothing? He seemed to see his mother come towards him from the corner of the room. She threw out her hand to him, just as one day, years ago, she had done when she fell in a faint. He wondered when he would see her again.

Would he ever see her? If he did this thing, what would happen to her and to his father? Was there any sense in it? Was it his duty? What duty had he towards this "Viktor"—this Pilsudski he had never even seen? It was madness to want to free him. What good was he for anything now, after a year in gaol and in a madhouse? Surely all his strength must be gone: he must be nothing but a useless wreck. How easy to concoct some story to convince the party that the whole escape had been impossible! Slowly the room began to turn. The walls seemed slipping away in melting spaces which gradually enveloped the young doctor. Thought, image, men, ideas, reality and dream fused into one within him. Chaos rushed through the excited brain of Mazurkiewicz.

Was this an attack of brain fever? Perhaps he ought to take his temperature. He began to pace the room from wall to wall—like a madman or a prisoner pent behind these walls eternally. He longed to be clear of this room, clear of the Asylum. Where was the door? A horrible

numbness seized him. To cross the room, to reach the door was impossible. It was as though his whole body were paralysed; he would never be able to drag himself over the floor. His forehead broke into sweat. Some strange emotion rose into his consciousness. Impossible to get out of this room alone! With Viktor! Only with Viktor! The certainty of this brought peace.

It was as though he had made some marvellous discovery. Viktor must help him, Viktor must be brought to him at once. Drops of sweat still stood on Mazurkiewicz's forehead. But now the great prescription ward was there again, with its long table down the centre, and under the window its shabby leather arm-chair, worn down from black to greyish brown.

Outside in the court the vivid green of May trees.

He grew strong and master of himself as his thoughts took their accustomed level. Again he felt the need for instant action. Every patient's record must be brought to him at once from the male section. He pretended to be deep in charts of lunacy: in full reports of child-murder, hallucination, incest, seizure. This exciting literature began to seem really interesting. Here was a case of psychosis hallucinatoria acuta. What a pity there was no time to read it carefully. He must go to Pilsudski's room.

Pilsudski sat on the edge of the bed talking to the attendant Andrei.

"Good evening, Mr. Pilsudski. I've just been going through your record. I see you come from Lithuania. I have some relations in Lithuania. You may know them, perhaps. I've never even seen them myself. Andrei, do you mind showing Mr. Pilsudski the way downstairs to the prescribing ward in about a quarter of an hour? I

ought to have had a talk with him long ago. Good evening, Andrei. Good evening, Mr. Pilsudski."

Back to the prescribing ward: into the laboratory. Then to the doctor's bedroom, off the receiving room, with the clothes. Everything was ready. It was time for the patient to be here. A knock.—"Come in!"

Andrei led in the sick man. A sick man indeed, by the look of him. In the striped Asylum uniform, with a black beard covering three-quarters of his face. He must be mad. Why did he stare like that? How his eyes shone! How calm he was—how calm. Well, yes, why shouldn't he be?

"Do please sit down, Mr. Pilsudski. Would you care for a glass of tea? Lemon? Of course—a cigarette! Now we can have a nice chat. We have so many friends in common."

Andrei stood in the doorway. All this bored him to distraction. He knew so well the chatter doctors use to make madmen believe they take them seriously. All the time they do nothing but cross-question you, and yet they pretend it's a chat.

"Andrei, you needn't wait. I have lots to say to Mr. Pilsudski. Don't bother to be back for an hour to take Mr. Pilsudski away. Good evening. Back in an hour. Don't forget!"

Eight o'clock! Now to the little bedroom for the clothes! In ten minutes Pilsudski was ready. He looked uncanny—thin, pale, black-bearded, with gleaming eyes. Surely this could only be a madman. This uncanny quietness—uncanny! The opera hat was a full size too big—it came down to his eyes. How absurd! Everything had been so carefully worked out, yet nobody had thought of re-

membering Viktor's measurement. No time to waste now.

"Are you ready, Pilsudski?"

Mazurkiewicz hurried to the main entrance to make sure the coast was clear. Damnation! Some stranger sitting in the hall-keeper's room. A spy? All up!—Why should it be? Haven't we sailed pretty close? The only thing to do was to take the long way round through the courtyard.

In the courtyard there was a holiday atmosphere. Attendants and keepers' families were sitting out on their doorsteps, chattering about the fair on the Champ de Mars, wishing they could be there too. The evening was still rosy with the afterglow; the courtyard's grey had warmed to blue. Everyone rose respectfully at the sight of the doctor on duty.

"Good evening, doctor."

"Good evening."

Control above all things. Control!

How huge—this courtyard! Huge yards like this must never be built again. Mustn't appear to hurry. Slowly!—quite slowly! . . . Slowly! Who hurries on a night like this? And the fair will go on till late at night. "Isn't that so, Mr. ——?"

The gates! The gates at last! The porter rises. He touches his dark blue cap with the brass badge.

"Good evening, sir."

The street. A little side street. Across the way trickles the Priazka—the tiny Priazka, which flows round the corner into the Mojka. Then they meet and flow on out into the Neva. A fine river, the Neva!

"Now, quick—the Oficierskaya! That's a big street—we can pick up a droshky there."

Thank Heavens, a droshky! rattling down the little side street.

"The Morskaya, isvostchick! In the Morskaya we must get out so that the driver mayn't know where we're going."

The broken-down horse can scarcely walk—skin and bones! Mazurkiewicz curses.

"What use are you except to follow funerals?"

"Well, barin, that isn't my fault. The beast's been in the street since morning. Get on, you son of a bitch!" The lash flicked round the horse's skeleton.

Pilsudski spoke. "Don't worry, Mazurkiewicz. What does it matter—a few minutes more or less? Just look how green the trees have turned. You can smell the spring in the air."

—How horribly quiet the fellow is! He might simply be going for a drive. The comrades are quite right, he's uncanny. Sitting there, puffing a cigarette, staring at the street.—

In the Morskaya they left their droshky. Another droshky, with a well-fed horse and brand-new, rubber tyres, brought the fugitives to their friend's house. No. 10, Wassieliewsky Ostrow.

In the uniform of a Russian customs official Pilsudski left Petersburg for Kiev, where "The Worker" was now being printed. Since he must fly Russia as quickly as possible he wanted, before going abroad, to take a last look at his creation. Though he only stayed a single night at the house of some Kiev comrades, he insisted on spending half of it helping to print the paper himself. He was seized with melancholy at the inevitable end of his activity, and with it of a large part of his youth. He loved the work, with all its dangers, more dearly now than in the days when he had done it himself.

Next day every paper in the Empire was full of the daring escape of Mazurkiewicz and Pilsudski, the great rebel. He himself was on his way to Galicia. Through the help of another party member, an agent on Count Zamoyski's estate, which lay very close to the frontier, he could be smuggled into Austria with his wife, who had joined her husband on the way. Then rest and recuperation.

After a few months in Cracow, Pilsudski went abroad on a holiday visit to foreign branches of the P.P.S. His longest stay was in London.

His escape had caused unheard-of jubilation in the ranks of the Polish socialists. He was fêted as a hero. The credit for his escape was very largely due to others, whose sacrifices had made it possible, yet the highest honours went to him. He had become again a symbol for the whole romance of rebellion, a symbol in which revolutionaries were honoured for their courage, their devotion, their faith. It was for him that all these deeds had been done—these forces strained in effort. Never for one instant had he doubted, during the whole of the last terrible year, that, in spite of this grotesque pretence of madness, he remained the focus of his party. His faith grew now that he was free. Had not fate led him, her chosen one, again by the steepest way? Only the exceptional need suffer. Only the elect have the strength to carry their grief without being crushed to earth.

In spite of his deep faith, his burning will, this crown had not been forged by any deed. It was shaped out of the atmosphere he moved in—from the nimbus of romance about his head.

His own deeds had scarcely contributed one laurel. It was enough that his real activity should be closed within the fortress of his heart—in his will, in his very faith. His

business was to contemplate ideas which shone forth out of the longings of a people: ideas shaped into deeds by his subordinates. Whence did such action spring? What were its limits?

Must this emblem of his race be painted with every tone of romance in the colours even of madness to the rhythm of a crazy dance? Such destiny would be strange indeed if it did not lead him to a summit.

Pilsudski looked up at his star and saw it ever in the ascendent. Even in the moments of his life when everything seemed shaken about him, when no single gleam of hope was to be seen, when all was craziness and vanity—in moments when powerlessness, ignorance and limitation seemed set in iron bands about his heart, the thought of ascendency was never entirely absent. He, if anyone, was strong enough to shatter walls and bonds.

Such will o' the wisps of hope flickered through this soul's darkest places.

CHAPTER V

REVOLUTION AND ADVENTURES

I

THERE could no longer be any question of remaining in "Congress" Poland. The Pilsudskis moved to Cracow. The summer was passed in the little mountain town Zakopane. They were alone, though much of their time was spent with friends, since Mme. Maria hated solitude.

Her husband took many trips to socialist centres; abroad, in Galicia, in Russia even. Naturally he used a false passport. His talents by this time had borne full fruit. He was the most arresting figure in the whole Polish socialist movement. On rare occasions when he appeared in public at demonstrations and party meetings, he could always be certain of a victory. And in private he could lead a conversation far out of the regions of the commonplace and give it a new and usually unexpected turn.

Most subjects in his hands became interesting. Many people, it is true, could scarcely follow his most original turns of thought, though few could be insensitive to his charm. Usually, to clarify a perception, he would seem to be talking to himself and discovering his own ideas. He would pace a room from end to end, his hands behind him, his head bent forward a little until he shot forth a sudden gesture with the hand that held his cigarette. He would pause whenever he wished to give special stress

to any point or had followed a train of reasoning to the end. Then he would pace the room again, sometimes for hours at a stretch. The thoughts of other men held little interest for him. He never tried to clarify his ideas by the ordinary methods of conversation. Alone, he would go up and down in silence, hammering out solutions for himself.

He believed his first impression of anything as his intuition had revealed it to be on a plane of absolute truth. Only by letting his mind go back, again and again, to this intuitive moment of "revelation" could he hope to draw the right conclusions. [Every event had its inevitable echo in his reaction to it.] To this reaction he would strive, in every case, to return, in matters even of the most complicated practical decisions.

Very rarely, at public meetings, could he strike the exact note to rouse the stolid apathy of crowds. If his theme were Russia he would break into savage abuse. He would harangue with crude passion, thresh out his subject, attack it again and again from every angle, till there seemed no conceivable reply. His opponents knew his power. At an open air meeting in Cracow when it came to Viktor's turn to speak an opposition leader shouted—"Don't listen! He'll only mislead you." The secrecy of his nature made clear, direct speech very difficult to him. His reasonings were tortuous and complicated. He loved to go to the roots of any idea, draw from it its most distant conclusions, reveal the very strangest hypotheses. The massed, confused, people he addressed—socialists who had grown and lived in mental darkness—were lost in admiration of Viktor's speeches. They had come together to exchange hazy thoughts of future betterment. They did not understand; had no wish to trace his threads or follow

him step by step. But they were conscious of a brother who himself had struggled from their darkness. They felt the contagion of his faith, a fire of which they themselves were rarely capable, a will they knew, dimly, to be necessary, the whole strength of a mind which was thinking on their behalf.

The dullest of these minds was roused by the strange, fierce, vivid epithets sprung from the most acute observation which came from the lips of this black-bearded, haggard man, with the frightening eyes, the stiff and close-cropped hair. His sternness seemed the negation of all compromise. Their wills submitted to this voice, whose charm and music its Lithuanian accent intensified. This music was often the only thing that held them. Viktor was frequently called "hypnotic." Many socialist leaders opposed such methods. Some, formed by statistics, proofs and figures, believed in intellectual persuasion. They considered him fantastic and a wind-bag. Those who liked him did not interfere, they could sense his personal distinction. Others again, more individual, who, though they saw the need for party unity, had their own very definite ideas, began to keep him at arms' length. They mistrusted him, asked whether at heart he cared for either workers or party and not for some personal end. They scarcely knew how to describe him. He was an egotist, a power-seeker.

But they could feel within him a will which refused to let itself be checked. He himself strengthened their impression. From day to day his manner became more commanding. And such circles as these were unused to the manners of command.

Though he could charm when he liked, could use every enticement of good breeding, he knew how to make them

feel the frigid pride of his class. He was never either petty or malicious, though he could flare up and pour forth abuse, break out into sudden, blind fits of shouting, animal rage, during which he usually knew what he was saying and seldom lost complete control.

He had friends who trusted him blindly and saw in him a hero and a saint; his enemies hated him, he seemed to them evil incarnate. His hobbies and interests had not changed. Chess was still his favourite recreation. He would sit well on into the night, drink glass after glass of tea, and smoke endless heaps of cigarettes.

He had little time left for reading, though Slovacki, whole pages of whose work he knew by heart, was still his favourite poet. And in recent years he had read Wejspianski, the ardent and melancholy singer of Polish freedom—and numerous books on strategy.

The theatre had been another interest. But he had less and less time to go to it. After Shakespeare whom he had loved since childhood, his favourites were Polish dramatists whose plays were nationalist in character. But work engrossed him more and more, and left him very few spare hours.

It was 1904: the time of the Russo-Japanese war. The double eagle was in danger, it soon became clear that he would moult a few of his feathers. There was much excitement in the ranks of the P.P.S., an excitement shared in most other political camps, whether they stood for Polish freedom or wished to conciliate the Russians.

The national-democrats, Roman Dmowski's conservative party, which included most middle-class elements, had hoped for peaceful concessions from the Czar. They were still against any anti-Russian activity. Their views

were shared by the great mass of illiterate peasants, and indeed the whole agricultural population. But these, too, had their left wing. It sympathized with Russian communists and the aims of the International. None of these parties used the methods of individual "frightfulness," and none of them, therefore, created so much stir as Pilsudski's party.

Pilsudski himself shared in these excitements. He believed that this time something would be sure to happen. Though the Poles were unprepared for active resistance they could at least use passive methods. When Russian recruiting officers began to appear in Polish streets to proclaim the general mobilization, P.P.S leaders felt that the time had come for resistance. They called a demonstration on the Place Grzybowski at Warsaw for November 13th. When a banner was raised with the legend "We refuse to fight for the Czar" the police intervened. Shots were fired from the crowd. A few gendarmes were killed. There followed an attack by regulars, who had been posted, in case of emergency, round the square, in courtyards and behind the doors of houses. They charged on horseback, riding down whoever stood against them. Fighting between troops and people continued for the whole of that day. Into the midst of this sullen battle the Petersburg demonstration burst like a shell. But all this led to nothing. Poland was still far too disorganized and immature for armed resistance. The day after, on November 14th, "The Polish Word," the National-Democratic organ, wrote as follows: "The activities of the P.P.S. are inspired from abroad. They are the result of foreign influences which can be traced back to England and Japan." The unrest continued and increased. It did not confine itself in Warsaw. In every town—in Lodz, in Zgierz, in

Widzew, in Sosnowiec, there were strikes and street-fighting between troops and workers.

Pilsudski did his best to unite all parties. He left Galicia and went into Poland and Russia, met socialist leaders, urged party headquarters to give word to resist military service. But no unity was ever reached. Not only were the masses untrained politically; the leaders, too, were undecided, particularist, and at odds with one another.

Never before had Pilsudski experienced so profoundly all the difficulties of uniting an enslaved people. And a people whose past had been enslaved!

Twenty years ago in Vilna it had been his closest friends who deserted him under the influence of Russian Revolutionaries. Would his country be any more reliable? Poland seemed bereft of courage and unity. He would do better, perhaps, abroad. He could not remain inactive when the world around him was in flames. He decided to approach the Japanese. For him, if they could serve the Polish cause, there existed neither foreigners nor enemies. He got into touch with their General Staff by means of the Japanese Legations. Early in 1905 he went to Japan. He had proposals to organize a Polish army corps which should fight in the west, attack the Russians from the rear, and be armed and financed by the Japanese Government. But Roman Dmowski, the pro-Russian leader of the National Democrats, had been before him. He feared Pilsudski's proposals would make things worse, and had felt it his duty to "prepare" his rival's suggestions so effectively that they proved abortive.

Staff officers received Pilsudski, but his chief propositions were rejected. He managed, however, to achieve some minor ends. Polish prisoners from the Russian armies who acted on P.P.S. instructions not to fight and to take

their first chance of deserting, were not to be returned to Russia. Polish organizations would arrange for their eventual transport to America. They were to be held in camps of their own, separate from other Russian prisoners, and given special treatment.

Pilsudski came back disappointed. His real mission had not been humanitarian. But he set himself forthwith to plan new battles. The whole of Russia was in more or less open revolt. Demonstrations, strikes, encounters between workers and troops followed close on one another's heels. Neither side was squeamish as to methods. It was an orgy of enraged hate. The workers were being hounded nearer and nearer to despair; there was danger that they would abandon the whole P.P.S. organization. They had ceased to oppose any system; it was no longer a case of fighting the Czar or Russia. Each individual soldier, each gendarme or official, became the enemy. Riots and blood-letting were the order of the day in Polish towns. It was useless now, merely to organize, and prepare for some future independence. It had become a case of hand to hand skirmishing, the crude, savage warfare of the streets. Resistance had to be secretly prepared since open rebellion was impossible. Pilsudski till now had led his party with words; he had guided and taught the Polish movement. From now his methods became rougher. These times encountered plans which for long had been hurrying through his brain. If everything were not to slip away, if the organization were not to crash to earth beneath him, and with it every dream of Polish liberty, the unbound masses must be led into battle and appeased.

Secret bands of armed workers were enrolled under Pilsudski's direction. Though he was the first to make it possible, the idea of forming such irregulars was not origi-

nally his own. But it was he who inspired the organization with the necessary pluck and enthusiasm. The party trusted his courage before he had given actual proof. He threw himself into this business of arming workers with as much energy as though he had been resting for years.

These armed bands made direct attack more feasible than ever it had been before. What had begun as a vision, the vision he had shaped into words, could now be tested and realized. He had no further need to preach the dream of rebellion; its reality was there before his eyes. And he, its dreamer and creator, remained concealed in the background—a priest set to guard the sacrifice that other men brought to his idea. Were these his deeds, or had he only called them into life? Was he their reality or their image? Could he tell where reality ceased and dreams began?—the wraithes he had shaped and made incarnate?

But now was the time for action. These irregulars would have to be organized. The enemy must be harassed by secret guerilla attacks. His bands were drilled for this, trained to hold up police transports, raid convoys and confiscate government funds.

The freeing of arrested comrades was the thing in which they took most pride. Their greatest achievement, the liberation at Pawiak Gaol.

In the spring of 1906 the Pawiak Gaol in Warsaw held a number of notable irregulars who had fallen into Russian hands. They had been sentenced to Siberia for life. One morning the governor received orders from the Chief of Police in Warsaw to deliver ten of his most important Polish prisoners to a certain police escort. The escort would be responsible for their safe conduct, under a Cossack guard, to Pavilion X in the Citadel. The police considered the Pawiak Gaol unsafe: it might not withstand

guerilla attacks. The prisoners' names were given in full and the name of the officer who would be responsible. That evening ten gendarmes, heavily armed, arrived at Pawiak.

A certain Captain von Budberg led this escort. He was the type of rather swaggering, rather high-handed, interfering Russian officer usually recruited from the German-Russian nobility of the Baltic province. The prison governor knew such officers only too well. They were invariably pushing, and nearly always very influential. The best thing, therefore, was to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

The prisoners were led out as soon as the captain delivered his papers. Thanks to powerful inducements from behind, the gendarmes, in spite of their protests, packed them into a special prison van. Gendarmes, as an extra precaution, also got into the van. The Cossacks had been posted in a dark street in the neighbourhood in order not to attract attention and a possible guerilla attack.

Not till the following day, when the driver of the van returned to Pawiak did Warsaw hear the romance of Pawiak Gaol.

It learnt that the driver had been chloroformed soon after the escort left the prison. His van had been pulled up in a lonely square, where, at the orders of "Baron von Budberg," the "gendarmes" had served out to the prisoners magnificent and genuine new revolvers, and foreign passports, a little less genuine, perhaps, but quite genuine enough to be useful. This well-connected officer and his gendarmes reported that night at party headquarters where Comrade Gorzechowski was congratulated on his well-bred Prussian swagger.

Usually it was a case of holding up convoys in charge of funds and forcing an escort to disgorge. In the most famous of these raids, the "Akcia Bezdanska" (attack at

Bezdary), led by Pilsudski himself, the irregulars scooped three million roubles. This money went to swell party funds and was used for propaganda purposes.

Sometimes Russian corpses had to be left. It mattered little whether individuals lived or died. An idea inspired these raiders, to which every man had been sacrificed. Each was important, since each might force successful issues; a plan might depend on the daring and initiative of each. But the idea was supreme, nothing outweighed it, neither courage, invention, a man's life, nor the lives of his comrades.

But in the end it was adventure that united; its purpose grew hazy and remote. Life and death had lost their meaning with the fate of the individual and the purpose of the whole movement. Adventures became the only sacred things; the general fate of the movement as insignificant as the fortunes of individuals. Ethics had ceased to have any universal validity; these men respected or rejected them according to this single standard. Innocent officials could be shot down since they stood on guard at the gates of a social order, in defence of a principle attacked. Each felt his right to kill in a cause which he, his friends, his leader, had created. Each believed himself ripe for high adventure. The middle ages had returned.

Pilsudski tasted the joys of future battle in these bloody escapades of his subordinates—the distant battle for which he longed. In these skirmishes, prepared with all the loving care of an artist, he could see in advance a fight which should one day bring his enemy low. That enemy called him a brigand-chief, a gangster. Such definitions did not move him. What were right and wrong, nobility and baseness, in his eyes set beside the great mother-image whose liberation filled his soul? He was a fanatic whose

universe centred round one idea whose whole existence was a duty laid on his shoulders to realize it. Earth moved for him according to his law. Stars shone for him with other light than they did for the rest of humanity. So convinced was he that it took him several years to perceive that these raids to which he had sacrificed law and life had been a boy's game. A game of masked bandits and noisy revolvers, of ambushes, adventures and much blood-letting —a tragic game. But a game.

Russia, the giant, could scarcely feel him. That hide had many centuries of thickness. It mattered nothing to Russia that revolvers should be fired in Poland, that police officials should lie face downwards on the grass, or that sealed boxes containing a hundred thousand roubles should fall into the hands of Polish agitators.

Pilsudski saw and made an end. These battles had only been adventures: and only madmen love an adventure for its own sake.

So he decided: having had in his hands for several years the lives of a hundred or so adventurers who galloped and used their revolvers. Realities, not games, were his object.

The P.P.S. began to disintegrate. Internal dissensions weakened both adventurers and the party. But Pilsudski had long ceased to be at one with it. He could hear new voices, though the clamour of the old was still around him. These voices were as much his own as if they had come from his lips.

These voices called. There must not be an instant's delay.

2

In Poland for many years the ideas "freedom" and "socialism" had been inseparable. Many middle-class

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people, therefore, were unmoved by hopes of Polish liberty. In "Congress" Poland, in Posen, to a certain extent also in Galicia, these people refused to listen to any ideas of independence.

These classes wished above all to defend their own economic position. In the Polish question they saw nothing but a chance for socialists and workers to whom they were more or less hostile.

By temperament Pilsudski was ready to fight any party with which the P.P.S. did not sympathize. He had believed that its support would be enough. But now he began to be afraid that his great idea might be sacrificed to party interests. He loved the "P.P.S.," but nothing bound him to it except the "independence" paragraph in its programme. His egocentric nature was unmoved by the thought that for more than ten years the P.P.S. had been his sole support—that he owed the party almost as much as it owed him. He refused to see it as a movement inseparable from the spirit of the times in which it was born. For him it was his work, a creation which centred round himself. Now, however, it might be dangerous to risk everything on this political card. The platform from which ideas of Polish freedom should be disseminated must not be draped in party colours. It must be national.

His armed bands had already meant a change of tactics. His appeal was to the spirit of adventure: the theses and words of a party programme were discarded. Politics, from now on, must cede to strategy.

His decision to break with the socialists did not cause his conscience many qualms. He had one god—Polish Independence. Every other principle must give way. The P.P.S. had long ceased to bind him inwardly when he decided to claim his liberty. Socialism had served its turn.

He had used to the full whatever scope if afforded for the realization of his ideas. It was a great semi-anonymous, half-independent mass. This mass had answered his need for self-expression. Only the crowd could have helped him to work out his own destiny.

His creative impulse could never be its own satisfaction, the self-sufficient subjective creativeness of an artist. His materials must always be human. For himself he was nothing, he could be everything if he could become a legend. As a circumscribed individual he was powerless. He needed crowds. But these crowds must be malleable, must be there within his hands for him to manipulate, entirely subject to his will, if ever he were to hope for success.

Socialism, he felt, was too much of the people, and not only on the people's behalf, to provide his nature, and the particular methods he could use, any lasting or permanent satisfaction.

It had not been by chance that he had chosen to work through a newspaper—the most personal instrument of mass-instruction. The socialist movement was in the hands of too many leaders and too many collective tendencies to offer any further scope. He longed to be at the head of a movement which should be under his sole leadership. He was a fighter. What better method than war could he use to weld a party for himself? Battle seemed at the moment the best method of furthering the Polish cause. A fight, he felt, would give him the chance of taking over absolute leadership. His irregulars, at least, had shown him that no effective attack could be made with them. Guerilla adventuring could never lead to final victory. Youth, not maturity, is charmed by adventure for adventure's sake. Pilsudski was forty, and felt himself completely a man. No more sporadic warfare of scattered groups or

individuals. He must give his first instinct fresh direction; resistance must be organized as one whole. What better means to this than an army?

Yes, an army would have to be called into being, if progress were ever to be made. One organized military unit must replace his socialist irregulars.

In 1905 he had attempted to induce Japan to build up a Polish army corps. He was fully convinced that Polish freedom could only be obtained by battle. Poland was too weak and too small ever to fight Russia in the open. But Poland was not the only country who, sooner or later, would be at war with her. It would be necessary to find an ally. Through battle alone could Poland convince the world that her freedom was a serious matter. War between Austria and Russia had begun to seem more possible every day. The Austrians, therefore, were the nearest and most natural allies. Such a war between the two double-eagles must be fought in a buffer state. To the east the Vistula had the same strategic importance as the Rhine. Unless she were prepared to decide, or at least to hasten her destinies, would Poland have any right to freedom?

A Polish army had always been a Polish dream. Many attempts had been made to realize it. Legions—Polish legions!

The deeds of each had been set forth in glorious colours, invested with all the glamour of heroism. There was the Emperor's Polish legion which fought so well at Somo Sierra. Polish blood had been poured out at Elster under Napoleon's eyes. The Poles had fought in 1848 under the Polish General Bem for Hungary's freedom. Poles had fought for Garibaldi. Kosciuszko and Pulaski had sought their war for freedom in America. For long the idea of an army had been cherished by the Polish spirit. Every wind

could stir this chord. Pilsudski was not the only man who had striven to make the dream a reality.

At the time when his idea first came to him political groups in Galicia were attempting to form armed brigades. But the military spirit was never so alive as in Pilsudski. No one else possessed his sense of discipline, his will to battle, his voice of authentic command. And no one had been before him in the building up of military cadres. For years this idea had more or less been present in his mind. Who knows when he first believed it possible? Had it been on days beside the printing-press, when he knew such occupation could not last? Or when, after his escape from St. Petersburg he wandered without rest from place to place? When did he first speak the word "army" without being taken for a madman?

Perhaps it had been in the Tatra one glorious evening in late summer, when golden peaks were fading into the dim violet of night.

It was the September of 1904. Pilsudski, with Mme. Maria, had come for a few days to Bukowina, a mountain village near Zakopane, where the poet Andrzej Strug had a chalet.

Strug and his wife were in the habit of asking a few close friends each year to stay with them and keep their wedding-day. This year too they sat round the table after supper. The room was not large, but its ceiling was raftered and the floor was bright with rugs which the mountain folk of the district could weave into the very gayest colours. Brown earthenware jugs, filled with heather and late poppies, were set about on window-sills and cupboards. The windows had been flung wide. A wind, laden with scents, blew in across the new-mown slopes from mountains. The room was bathed in copper light from

an oil lamp, which cast the softest shadows. A gleam of day which had caught it and picked it out in silver lingered round a single peak. Supper was just over. Fresh cake and mulled wine was on the table. The sweet wind blew cool into a room still warmed with sun and veiled in a haze of cigarette smoke. These people were in a holiday mood.

Ziuk drew the talk his way, as he usually did at such moments. The later it grew the higher his excitement rose. A demon of restlessness would seize him when the people around him were at peace. Wine and cigarettes were soon not enough to appease him. He could not remain in one place, and paced the little room up and down; behind him, from wall to wall, his shadow, distorted and huge, like a shadow cast on a stage. His friends knew that when Ziuk was thinking aloud it was better to let him follow his thought. To-night they sat entranced. He spoke of his work, told stories of Siberia and the Citadel, broke into sudden anger against Russia, quoted passages from Slovacki and Wepianski. Then of the future. Not a future wrapped in vague dreams on the hazy summits of aspiration, but of facts that had become a part of his mind—of the need for a Polish army, its mission, its whole structure. He could see it there before him, something to defend and to explain.

When a cool Tatra breeze blew the window curtains back into the room and showed these friends that midnight was long since past, they knew that a Polish army would exist. Whenever Ziuk spoke of any plan with as much determination as this, that plan was sure to be realized. He could make others feel its reality. He was with friends in this little Tatra chalet, who loved him and believed in him already.

Austrian Poland was the only possible country in which to prepare a Polish army. The Galician authorities were indifferent to the political activity of the Poles. There was no ochrana here, no ubiquitous secret police. Cracow became as much a centre for political exiles as London had been twenty years previously. Even Russian revolutionaries fled here rather than to Switzerland or England. The Austrians saw a kind of allies in these anti-Russian elements: unofficial allies with whom they had no wish to interfere. Here Lenin came to edit a newspaper. The authorities allowed him to remain when Polish socialists agreed to go bail for him. Though, to avoid possible conflicts, he refused to mix with other socialists, he was arrested in the end and sent to Vienna. Thanks, however, to the guarantees of a Polish socialist, he was released and allowed to go to Switzerland.

In these circumstances, then, Pilsudski had only to interest the Austrian authorities enough to get the permission to found his military cadres. He had also, if possible, to persuade them to allow him equipment. He went from one garrison and one chief of department to the next. The Austrians would promise nothing definite, and preferred not to give him guarantees. But they saw no reason for opposing him or putting difficulties in his way, and allowed the new "gunmen" he had formed to drill in uniform, and attend rifle practice in Austrian government ranges. They even provided them with out-of-date service rifles.

The year 1909 saw the first beginning of an "army fund" destined to form the nucleus of Polish military finance. But subscriptions took long to dribble in. "Congress" Poles were afraid to subscribe, Posen contributed

very little. The Poles in America were the most generous at this early stage.

The youth of Galicia were fired with enthusiasm for his scheme. Young men for whom the cause was sacred soon joined the gunmen's ranks. Pilsudski set great store by men whose courage had already been tried. The nucleus of his gunmen was formed by members of his first armed bands, together with a certain number of socialists with whom he was in particular sympathy. These men, apart from a few instructors, drilled in their spare time on Saturdays and holidays. A number of students from Lemberg and Cracow universities decided eventually to enroll. Sundays were spent route-marching, and in the summer the corps drilled indefatigably. Their uniform was sky-blue and grey; it was the first realization of Polish military dreams.

These gunmen were more than a political and military organization. Independent Poland found its first visible symbol in the corps. It aroused enthusiasms not only among adventurous young men, the students and young workmen who enrolled in it, but among the whole intellectual élite of Galician Poland. Writers and historians of the position and reputation of Zeromski, Micinski, Strug, Kucharzewski, Sieroszewski, joined its ranks. The corps was a reality, with uniforms, rifle practice, old-fashioned Austrian rifles and several thousand members.

Young men of the educated class, students in particular, journalists and scientists, budding lawyers, doctors and artists, saw in these "gunmen" a realized dream of their boyhood. It was this class that furnished the highest tally of recruits. In December 1912 political associations in Galicia published a majority declaration, stating the ob-

jects of the corps and declaring Pilsudski its leader. He obtained thus, officially, and by consent of all parties, a rank he had held for several years. He had devoted much spare time to military science ever since his escape from St. Petersburg. In the days when he armed his first bands he was already a competent officer. When the gunmen were formed he had more knowledge of military organization than any other party leader. Military studies attracted him, quite apart from their bearings on politics. The son of a noble family, whose tradition for generations had been the tradition of arms, very naturally found soldiering congenial. To this mind, which the Napoleonic legend had formed, which from earliest childhood had dreamed of leadership, the uniform seemed the finest symbol of liberty. For so long as it had seemed mere madness to hope that he would ever lead an army, he had been content to wait for better times.

These times had come at last; he had become a soldier, could throw himself with as much enthusiasm into soldiering as if it had formed his single aim. He tried by private study to make up for what he lacked in training. Friends in the Austrian high command gave him access to the newest technical literature of the Austrian general staff. He took lessons in tactics from other soldier-friends. Once he had devoured books on Napoleon, on the heroes of antiquity, on the history of the French revolution. Now he read strategics. Battles had become his favourite study. He knew all Napoleon's campaigns, and had studied the Russo-Japanese war in every detail. He was not only familiar with the general strategic plan, but knew exactly where each division had been placed on any particular day, how it was officered, how many guns had been taken. His excellent memory had never stood him in better

stead. He had the faculty of carrying in his head, for years, figures, names and relationships down to their minutest detail. Now he took pains to exercise this gift to the full. His passion for observation, which had served so well to shorten his days of exile in Siberia and in prison, found its object in military detail, in the exact estimation of masses, distance and duration, which military science demands.

Among socialists he had always been a leader, had never held subordinate rank. Here, too, it seemed natural that he should command. His sureness of himself, his evident and unshakable conviction made contradiction impossible. He would arouse either repulsion and hostility or innate devotion and trust. There was no question of working in conjunction with him, deciding on equal terms between two equally valid opinions. His admirers loved him and surrendered to his personal magnetism: they became his unquestioning servants. His personality must necessarily have come as a revelation to young, emotionally somewhat unbalanced individuals. Such men—talented dilettanti, very often superficial and without any solid principle; men for whom appearances could take the place of reality, men made undecided and vacillating by their lack of any definite social, and, not seldom, of any ethical, conviction. Such men, capable of enthusiasm, but at the same time very easily disillusioned, rarely had the spiritual stamina to shoulder any great responsibilities.

Most of these enthusiasts, café littérateurs, doctors with a taste for politics, schoolmasters interested in things military, gave him the most unquestioning obedience. They felt that here was a man who knew his mind, had the will to get what he wanted, and would never be deflected from his purpose; whose determination, in

short, was so fanatical that sometimes it almost terrified.

They felt in him a leader. He would lift each individual responsibility, would think for them and stand guard on their behalf. Here, at last, amid all the confusion of ideas, groups, tendencies and creeds, among all the hierarchy of idols, whether their names were Marx or Tolstoy, Kosciuszko or Byron, Nietzsche or Bergson, Zola, Strindberg, Baudelaire or Wilde, was a mind which would give them certainties, could dispel everything vague. They might disagree, but they felt safe. And so they submitted blindly.

It was natural enough that those who took no part in the organization and had no personal knowledge of Pilsudski should have seen things from another angle. He depended for support on the middle class, a class hostile to every innovation which seemed in the least revolutionary. This public did not heed his call to arms. He had believed, with the simplicity of a soldier inexperienced in matters of business, that donations for his undertaking would pour in. Instead, they came very slowly. He saw that he had miscalculated. The general public, on whose behalf and for whose future betterment he firmly believed himself to be striving, remained apathetic and cold. This was not the first time they had deceived him. Were his people so cowardly then, so visionless? He, whose sense of ultimate values was acute, who saw everything in its great outlines, could not grasp the psychology of a class who in times of peace had necessarily to consider before all else the stability and tenor of their lives; to whom prosperity seemed of more value than passionate diatribes in which most of them could see nothing more than vague and rather theatrical utopianism. What were Josef Pilsudski and his gunmen to the majority of middle-class people? They saw

in him a crazy patriot who had suffered much and was doing his best to make himself believe in Utopias of Polish Independence. There were those, even less well disposed, who saw a phrase-monger striving to push himself forward—an idle visionary, an ex-political convict, who had managed to humbug young men into playing a game of soldiers.

People of more acute perceptions were intelligent enough to realize that something new was being achieved, which neither abuse nor blind credulity could destroy. But they neither helped nor hindered the movement. What they saw was, for the present, nothing more than an interesting spectacle: they could watch it develop and spread without needing to take personal part. Pilsudski hesitated more than once as he sensed this stolid middle-class apathy. He made no attempt to penetrate or stir it. Had the whole effort any meaning? For whom, then? For these shop-keeping vulgarians? But his will was firm. He could not lose faith so readily. He knew instinctively that no truth is ever made actual by the brittle thing called public opinion. Strength lay in his own concentration, in a staying-power which should form its own protective shell. No crowd, moreover, not even his people as a whole, had reality for him, except when he demanded it. This country and these people had little interest apart from their ultimate reality. He lived for an idea, an absolute. The land and the mass of citizens interested him less and less. He fought for Poland; the idea of a Polish nation.

Untroubled in his belief, he strove to shape his gunmen's corps into the nucleus of an efficient army. Similar groups, in the meantime, had been formed among the Poles abroad. The movement at first had been tinged with socialism. But now, abroad, many military formations

sprang up whose politics were anti-socialist. All groups, in time, put themselves under Pilsudski's leadership.

He travelled from country to country, guiding and testing the work of these various formations. He lectured and received reports, gathered all their leaders round himself. In the winter of 1914 he made a long tour of inspection including all these foreign corps. His days were filled with inspections, with lectures on military subjects, with the working out of programmes. Paris was the last place he visited. It contained the greatest number of foreign gunmen. He remained there only three days.

He had never seen the city before and had little time to give to it. But he managed to pay a fleeting visit to Montmartre, to Juliusz Slovacki's grave—the grave of the poet of "Kordjan" and "Beniowski."

And he found time to visit the tomb which stands under the high dome of the Invalides.

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I

LEGIONS

I

THE heavy summer skies grew duller and more menacing. It seemed that any instant lightning-streaks would dart from these lowering, sulphurous clouds. The air shimmered.

Each puff of wind, these airless, July days, brought with it a new presage of war. But Pilsudski's gunmen were dispersed. The summer holidays had scattered them far and wide. Feverish activity began. The corps must be ready. Blood was up! The hour was already drawing near.

This was no war of Austrians and Serbians, no general embroilment of the world. It was a war that should bring a land her freedom. Dissensions melted into one in a furnace of excited expectation. The war and the army were realities. The Conservative "associates of the gunmen," who, up to now had stood aside, put themseleves in Pilsudski's hands.

On August 3rd seventy-four deputies from these associates called on Pilsudski. They declared themselves ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the gunmen. Before this great reality, a national war, they were willing to sink all differences. Commandant Pilsudski spoke to the assembled corps and gave, as its first general, the first address to Poland's first free army.

He was serious and dignified. He stripped the leaden

eagle from his képi—the eagle that had been his gunmen's badge—and handed it to the leader of the associates, whose badge he took in exchange. The men followed their Commandant's example. The Cracow headquarters of the gunmen sent out orders to every member to report. Equipment was the first necessity. Pilsudski worked for twenty hours a day. His men longed for action.

But they were armed with discarded Austrian rifles; they were without machine guns or field kitchens, had only a couple of small and antiquated field pieces, and not enough munitions. The Austrians promised, put off, made excuses. But something had to be done. Though it was idle to think of beating Russia, Pilsudski's men must show their own preparedness and the will to go to the front.

Pilsudski saw that for the moment it was useless to count on real help from the Austrians. He decided to do without them. No one should say of him that at the moment when war was declared he was standing by with idle hands. His own "war" on Russia had begun before the night between the 5th and 6th of August. His first contingent of gunmen left Cracow at 3 A. M. and crossed the frontier that morning. His dream had begun to come true. He, as general of the first Polish army, had sent his men into enemy territory.

But what was the truth of this fulfilment? The "army" which crossed the Russian border was a hundred and seventy-two strong. Ninety-eight were gunmen, seventy-four associates. These were all he could arm, and his legion had to cross by permission of Austria. They carried their ammunition in their pockets. Eight cavalrymen led them. Five rode Cossack ponies, which they had looted the previous day from a Russian border patrol in a daring raid across the frontier; the others advanced on foot, carrying their

saddles and stirrups, their horses had still to be won. The Pilsudski epic began with 172 men, by favour of a pass from Captain Rybak of the Austrian Imperial Army.

For Pilsudski this beginning was a symbol and nothing more. It gave proof of the reality of his purpose. He knew that this meant far more than a sham invasion with a few badly armed volunteers. It meant that the country would be with him. Unity would be created and a fostering ground prepared for future regiments, a thousand times greater than this. He was a soldier; his action was strategic. But the revolutionary in him had not died. Some central point must be built up round which, in the general excitement and lack of direction of the war, the whole of Poland could rally. A rallying cry was needed.

On the 3rd of August, in Cracow, the centre of the movement for independence, a manifesto had already appeared:

"Poles! A people's government has been established in Warsaw. It is the duty of every Polish citizen to submit to its authority. Citizen Josef Pilsudski, whose orders must be obeyed by all, is appointed leader of the military forces of Poland. August 3rd, 1914."

Pilsudski, at the same time, published his act of submission to the will of the "People's Government." Cracow —the whole of Galicia—listened with great excitement. A people's government in Warsaw? Who had founded it? Who was its leader? All parties sought the answer to this riddle. Communications with "Congress" Poland had been cut off. Pilsudski alone knew the answer. He explained to a hastily summoned conference of party leaders that in future he would only consider himself answerable to the people's government in Warsaw. Parties and local

groups had ceased to exist for him. He knew and trusted the men who composed the people's government. Since they had authorized him and placed the power in his hands, he felt himself justified in taking sole responsibility for future military operations.

In this fashion Pilsudski freed himself from all outside interference. The Warsaw "people's government" was the sole authority he acknowledged. And this "people's government" was Josef Pilsudski himself. There was no people's government in Warsaw. No declaration had been issued in "Congress" Poland; no established authority had sanctioned Pilsudski's arms.

The "Warsaw government" only existed in his mind. He himself had composed its manifesto, had cut himself free with one stroke. Very few people believed in this government's reality, but nobody dared deny it. Each hour brought a new event. It was impossible to take any steps to contradict Pilsudski.

And why, in any case, attempt it? This condottiere had triumphed. His illegal act had given him the sanction of laws which, for the time being, nobody could prove him to have violated. He was free and at the head of his men. An army existed in part, the whole of which would soon be a reality.

For long it had been his idea. He had realized it by sheer strength of faith and will, and forced it into the minds of his contemporaries. But, in another sense, it was the idea that had him in its power. Its strength was such that it released, in him, undreamed-of forces.

At last he saw himself entrusted with the part he had longed to play since boyhood—with the leadership of a Polish army which was waging war on Russia. He believed in his genius for command, was as serious a leader as if he

had been at the head of vast forces, at war with the gathered strength of Czardom. But the position was too tragic, too grotesque, to prevent his perceiving, at last, how powerless the legions really were.

He could dispose of a force 2000 strong. They were in four battalions, their technical equipment worse than inadequate. He saw at once the absurdity of their pretensions to take part in a modern war with all its mechanical demands. But this army differed in more than mere technical equipment from the other forces which had gone out on to a hundred battle fields. The distinction went much deeper. The enthusiasms which united this handful of men had not been kindled by the sudden conflagration of the hour. There was a comradeship among them which, ever since their earliest childhood, the same vision had forged. The hardships they bore were not borne in the name of any sudden battle-cry or newly awakened patriotism. Their endurance was the inheritance of a hundred and forty years. This was a holy war for the youth who gathered round Pilsudski, the necessity for which had not been the revelation of weeks, but something they had perceived ever since they could think at all.

Almost all the soldiers in this army were educated men. They were very conscious of their race. The will to fight latent in the Polish character found an outlet there which till then it had had to seek in the exaggerations of "messianic" intellectual movements. Moreover, this first Polish brigade had a common bond of fanatical devotion to its leader. Pilsudski was a hero. To die for him was no less glorious than to die for Poland herself.

Distinctions between commissioned ranks and men were necessarily less hard and fast in regiments whose officers and privates had often been close friends since boy-

hood. These troops were nearer to their officers; they could treat them with a freedom unthinkable in any other army. Yet Pilsudski's authority was so absolute that nobody would have dreamed of opposing him. "The Commandant," or, as they called him now, "the Brigadier," was the subject of an idolatry ready for the hardest sacrifice.

He knew how to preserve dignity which helped to recreate this glamour and intensify the devotion of subordinates.

His rigorous self-discipline in externals was now particularly useful. He could sleep whole nights among his humblest soldiers on the roughest floors of peasant houses. His food was of the coarsest. He paid no heed whatever to his surroundings; did not notice, as a rule, what he ate, devouring with nervous haste whatever had been set before him. He was perfectly satisfied if he could have unlimited tea and cigarettes. Neither did he care what he wore. Many of his officers took pride in their gay and tasselled uniforms. It was natural enough; they were the first officers of a newly created army. Pilsudski, in all weathers, would be seen in the same grey-blue tunic, the same shapeless képi, the "Maciejowka" on his head, with no indication of rank, no tabs, nothing that stood out.

The men had many stories of their general's simplicity and plainness. They were always spreading new tales of his love for his mare "Kasztanka." Pilsudski did not care much for animals, but his affection for Kasztanka was profound. He could not have borne to lose her; she had become an essential part of his life. He loved to talk of her wildness and her tricks. "Kasztanka" added to his fame. Innumerable Kasztanka stories began to spread.

Among themselves the men called Pilsudski "Dziadek" (grand-dad). From the very first he had felt himself the

father of his army. Never before had he found any body of people who surrendered so whole-heartedly to his influence. Here he was undisputed, the sole hero and leader. These men were his possession, his work. They had raised him up and helped him in his fight for liberty. In the heart of this determined man, who, till now, had had no thought but of his purpose, a wave of tenderness rose. This army was his best, his most precious, means of self-expression. He seldom let this feeling be seen, and only by his closest associates. He was hard, severe, at times quick-tempered. But the men felt that "grand-dad" really loved them.

Close on the heels of his first 172 men Pilsudski invaded Russian Poland at the head of just two thousand. He disobeyed Austrian orders and pushed forward as far as Kielce, which town he entered in advance of the German and Austrian troops. Kielce became his headquarters and the centre of the legion's activities.

In the meantime, in Cracow, a national committee had been formed—the Naczelny Komitet Norodowy ("N.K.N.")—which took over the political representation of Austrian Poland.

The N.K.N. could see as clearly as Pilsudski the necessity for co-operation with Austria. It tried with Austrian help to obtain the best terms for Poland. Its chief effort was to legalize and build up the military structure of which Pilsudski had laid the foundations. Further legions were recruited whose ranks were swelled with Galicians, as well as with "Congress" Poles. In this manner Galicians were freed from the obligations to serve in Austrian armies. A special high command was created to which Polish staff officers were appointed, who till then had served under Austria. This high command, from now on, was the

highest rank in the Polish army, which it represented officially on the Austrian general staff. A Polish officer was appointed to that staff whose duty it was to keep a special tally of legionaries. He thus became liaison officer between the Austrian and Polish high commands.

Since the N.K.N. seemed qualified to conduct recruiting and the formation of further regiments, Pilsudski declared himself in agreement with it. But the connection was anything but harmonious. Differences of opinion were frequent; they were as much political as military. They arose chiefly from his relationship with Austria.

The legionaries had taken an oath to the Austrian Imperial throne. They were dependent on Austria and formed an integral part of an Austrian army corps. Yet profitable co-operation was very difficult. The Austrians had every reason to consider these new legionaries useful allies, yet they showed as much contempt and mistrust as though they had been fighting against the Poles. Most exasperating of all were the assumptions of local military authorities, who paid little heed to orders from Vienna and pursued a policy of their own. Generals without experience, suddenly jumped into power, would harass the civil population in invaded Polish territory. Their tyrannies and vexations were entirely outside the intentions of Austrian policy and due solely to these officers' own stupidity. Pilsudski learnt that in many invaded towns the civil population—even the women—had orders to leave the pavement at the approach of an Austrian officer; the men were all obliged to raise their hats.

These petty impositions by an "ally" naturally enraged a man as full of national pride as Pilsudski. He approached the military authorities and complained.

And the interests of his own men forced him to fresh

complaints and recriminations. There had been several quarrels, even bloodshed, between Polish and Austrian troops, caused as much by hot temper and frequent indiscipline in the legions as by petty spite and ill-will on the side of Austrian officers. Most painful of all were brawls in the legionaries' own ranks. In the first brigade, which he himself had formed and commanded, everything went smoothly enough, thanks to the spirit of comradeship and self-discipline. But other, more recently founded, legions were in a state of perpetual uproar, due to imperfect discipline, the strong individualism and touchy sensitiveness of the Polish character, with its unreasoning love of a fight. The Austrian military system, bureaucratic and mistrustful was a demoralizing influence on the legions. They had no discipline of their own to oppose to this Austrian system. The high intellectual level and patriotic camaraderie that prevailed in the first brigade had supplied defects in organization. The later formations were recruited from the poorer classes, peasants for the most part, quite unused to military subordination or esprit de corps.

But the fanatical patriotism of all legionaries, their indomitable fighting spirit, were the positive elements with which Pilsudski built his legions. He developed these natural qualities into a welded courage, which made possible their bravest deeds. More than once this spirit which informed them forced grudging admiration from, usually hostile, Austrian and even German commanders. Ludendorff, even, in a letter to von Zimmermann, the Secretary of State, was obliged to admit that "the Pole is a good soldier."

At the siege of Kukle, a village set high up in the mountains and strongly held by the Russians, General von Linsingen, who time after time had seen German and Aus-

trian regiments beaten back, gave orders that any troops who could succeed in capturing the village should be cheered by the whole division. The Polish Legions, which till then had not been in action, volunteered. Such rewards were especially tempting. They did not let the general repeat his offer. Kukle, within two hours, had fallen. Their victory was rewarded with three shouts of "Hurrah for the Legions!" from Austrian and German regiments, with Linsingen at their head.

But in spite of their fighting spirit the legions were treated too shabbily to have many chances of notable achievement. It was a case less of fighting the enemy than of making the best of their own defective equipment, of lack of organization and good-will, factors with which Pilsudski himself would often contend in vain. He, especially, the leader of these wars, the general of this exceptional army, was typical of this unusual epic!

It was apparent in the first weeks of the campaign how unreal was the enemy that he fought. He contended with difficulties sprung from his own ranks or the natural consequence of indiscipline and technical deficiencies. Even in the past he had had to fight Polish incompetence. He had had to guide nationalist enthusiasm into clear and conscious objectivity from the regions of the vaguest sentimentality. Public opinion, even then, had not been historically educated. Masses, who, though full of enthusiasm, and passion, were without any real knowledge, had had to be taught the most elementary facts about their country. These deficiencies, the result of the whole Polish situation, were just as apparent in war-time. He had set out with the faith and fire of a Don Quixote; but his men had no soles to their boots; they carried the few spare

cartridges the authorities had been kind enough to allow them in pockets full of holes.

His earliest military task seemed a grotesque symbol for his whole dream of victory. At the end of September 1914 he was ordered by the Austrians to hold a sector in South Poland between Opatowic and Viniary in an especially dangerous part of the line, at the junction of three rivers, the Vistula, the Nida, and the Dunajec. In spite of Russian bombardment and the superior strength of an enemy whose lines were a few kilometres away, Pilsudski did not have to fight the Russians. He fought his own countrymen, their lack of training and equipment. He had been ordered to concentrate his forces on the opposite banks of the Vistula as protection to some Austrian regiments which were also to be moved across the river.

To prevent a sudden Russian counter-attack the Austrians had burnt the only bridge and riddled the few remaining river craft. Pilsudski's men had to manage with a single ferry boat. Instead of being able to get his troops across in the shortest possible time and send them straight on into action, Pilsudski was obliged to spend his day in a miserable effort to make up for this lack of technical equipment. All that day and through the whole of the night which followed it, he stood on the bank superintending the transport of his men. Russian artillery pounded away unceasingly, setting fire to surrounding villages and manors. Shells dropped closer and closer, flames from the burning country-side sprang high. Pilsudski, utterly powerless, had to stand there watching his men strive miserably with their single boat. The rivers began to overflow. When darkness threatened to add yet

another difficulty, the rising water made it even harder to cross. Many of the men no longer dared trust themselves to the angry stream. Then, as though everything were against him, Pilsudski was seized with fever. Not the fever of excitement and battle, but an ordinary influenza chill. He stood hour after hour on the bank, shaking with cold, ankle-deep in water and mud, watching, by the red glare of burning villages, the wretched boat driven down by the swollen tide. The sky was windless, but these floods were due to recent rains. Truly it was the battle of Don Quixote. When, after many hours' exhaustion, nearly every man had been transported, Pilsudski learnt that a few kilometres down-stream there were brand-new pontoons belonging to an Austrian division. They reached him at last, but there were few troops left to use them. And when the whole weary business ended and the last man was across, word came through that the position need no longer be held. The Austrians had decided to land their regiments further down.

All his life many difficulties had solved themselves without him. More than once he had strained every nerve to attain an object which came to him in spite of himself. As he lay in high fever at the end of this day of futile effort his excited brain held the pictures of gigantic enemies. These enemies were not Russian troops, they were the rivers of his native land. He lay in a priest's house, which somehow had escaped the bombardment, and the names of these rivers flowed on and on through his brain. They came to life, became the sole reality of the war. The Vistula, the Nida, the Dunajec—then the names of earlier rivers—the Priazka, the Mojka.

He remembered his escape from the Petersburg asylum,

and felt that in the most decisive moments of his life some river would always play a part.

Once firmly established in Kielce, Pilsudski tried to make himself independent and shake off the N.K.N. And he wanted to get clear of Austria. He decided to approach the Germans. With this in mind he founded in Kielce a special political organization which he hoped, later on, to use as a basis for direct negotiations with Germany. He never stopped to ask himself whether such action might be considered a breach of faith to Austria. Final success to him was all that mattered, and German military power as useful a means to it as Austrian. He hoped that the Germans would help him. He would be prepared, in exchange, to offer them the use of the excellent secret service of the legions, run for the most part by women. These women brought news of the movements of the Russian Army. Though his sympathies were neither German nor Austrian, he respected the Germans,—he admired them even,—far more. With them he hoped that he could count on more business-like methods in dealing with the question of further extension for his legions. German efficiency and discipline came as a relief from the inefficiency and vacillations of Austrian military authorities. His one object was to strengthen his own troops and give them greater freedom of action. Negotiations, direct and indirect, were in the hands, on the German side, of General von Ludendorff, and two other officers.

But these tentatives were soon to be proved vain. For political reasons a final understanding was impossible. Both parties broke off negotiations without having come to a decision.

Pilsudski's attempts to build up a strong army of legion-

aries were frustrated again and again, not only by foreign complications, but by the difficulties of a political situation which affected the legionaries themselves.

Till the end of 1914 the German and Austrian position on the Eastern front had threatened to become very serious. East Prussia and Galicia were then both in Russian hands. It would have been treachery at such a moment for Pilsudski to abandon his former allies. In military matters he tried to be particularly scrupulous. He knew his power as a soldier, and saw in the military life his own highest personal fulfilment. He never for an instant thought of trying to disband his legions or dissolve this desperate brotherhood in arms. He decided to allow his half-famished, broken-booted troops to fight on, on the side of Central Europe. It was possible, until 1915, to set before the eyes of young men the objective of a war against Russia fought on behalf of Polish liberty. They were not fighting as the allies of Austria and Germany, but to free their native land.

But by the summer of 1915 the position had completely changed. Russia was in retreat. The greater part of Galicia had been freed. "Congress" Poland, even, had no need of liberation from Russian "serfdom." Russian Poland was in the hands of German and Austrian troops. Warsaw, under General von Bessler, was the centre of German occupation, and Lublin under General von Kuk, of Austrian. It was unnecessary, now, to fight wars of liberation against Russia. It would go without saying that the alliance with the Central Powers should continue provided there could be some guarantee that this would mean eventual independence. The legions were not, like other armies, a purely military formation. Their spirit and origin were political and their ranks very politically conscious. Pol-

itics meant even more than fighting. They obeyed their commander, but had no hesitation whatever in expressing their own political opinion of every new step or fresh event. Now they began to ask themselves the question for whom their fighting was to be done. A military alliance with the Central Powers had never been the intention of Polish arms or Polish policy. But the Central Powers themselves were undecided on solutions to the Polish question. For the present war was all important. For them it was a case of inducing the Poles to form an army which should fight with the Germans against Russia. Their intentions became clearer and clearer, and Pilsudski found it increasingly difficult to give a raison d'être to Polish legions, created by, and in, the hope of an independent Poland. Even among the younger men enthusiasm for the legions was on the wane.

The unrest increased from day to day. It vented itself in constant quarrels in the ranks. Pilsudski perceived that inaction might lead to more success than deeds. These men must be disbanded if the legions themselves and the idea of a Polish army were to be saved. Though in 1915 he had already felt the position impossible, he tried, for long, to improve the status of his troops. When it became quite obvious that neither the independence of the legions nor a definite promise of autonomy could be expected from the Central Powers, he decided to put an end to uncertainty. He sent in his papers to the Austrians in the autumn of 1916. In September he resigned his command.

Most officers of the first brigades sent in their papers with Pilsudski. The legions themselves could not be disbanded at once, but to a man they were faithful to their leader. They understood that for him it was impossible to remain at the head of an army which had been com-

pelled to be false to its original purposes. All their disaffection was turned against the Austrian and German authorities.

Pilsudski, even in war-time, had remained true to his old principle of foresight and secret preparation. If his official policy of a legally constituted army composed of legionaries were to fail, he must still be protected and keep some cards in his hands which would make possible eventual success. This was not the first occasion on which he had foreseen the future course of events. He had had little faith, even at the outbreak of war, in any promises the Central Powers had made. He knew that Germany and Austria would, sooner or later, attempt to use the legions, whose own preparedness alone could make a success of them. When he formed them; he had made a gesture for freedom for all to see. But even then, in secret, he had begun to build up a second army. This army should keep its own independence; it should be subordinate neither to Austria nor Germany.

In most of the towns of "Congress" Poland Pilsudski's subordinates had organized secret military cadres—the P.O.W. (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa). Though he himself could take no official part in them, they were led by his friends, and even by officers from his legions. Thus, while in the Austrian section of his country he commanded a legalized army, in Russian Poland a second and illegal one was in formation. It was impossible for the moment to say against whom this force would be used; on all sides it was fully independent.

The policy of evening drill and military preparations in general were modelled on the system of the Cracow gunmen. At the moment when he sent in his papers, when a portion of his legions was on the eve of being disbanded,

DURING THE GREAT WAR

several thousand young men were in readiness for a new call to arms from "Brigadier" Pilsudski.

2

Even the great upheavals of war could not bring any interested power to attempt a solution of the Polish question. Neither Germany, Austria nor Russia took a clear and defined standpoint. Everyone agreed that Poland was a factor to be reckoned with—but that was all. The Powers attempted to form a Polish army and use it for their own ends; but politically it was a game of blind man's buff with many empty manifestoes which, though they spoke of a free and united Poland, were taken as lightly by the people who had composed them as by those to whom they were addressed.

The manifesto of August 14, 1914, issued by the Grand Duke Nicolas Nicolevitch, also promised a unification of Polish territory under the sceptre of the Romanoffs, though nobody on the Russian side thought for an instant that this promise would be kept. To prevent its being taken too seriously, it was not issued by the Czar in person, but merely bore his uncle's signature. As late as in the autumn of 1916, when not a foot of Polish territory still remained in Russian hands, the Czar explained to Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador—"It was always my intention to form a united Poland under Russian protectorate. But I can see no possibility of incorporating Prussian Poland with this Poland." The powers all wanted to raise the hopes of Poland. They had no intention of freeing or uniting her.

A Polish committee, composed principally of Conservative National Democrats, whose members were pro-Russian, tried at first to influence Polish opinion in favor

of Russia. When the Germans took Warsaw the committee established itself in Petersburg. But from there it was impossible to control the Polish situation. This pro-Russian policy suffered a set-back when it became known how the Russian armies, in invading Galicia, had behaved in the summer of 1914–15. They had pursued a policy of aggression, anti-Polish and anti-Catholic, as though Galicia had been a Russian province, and there had been no grand-ducal manifesto. Russian policy was too clumsy to win the whole land and its army by an immediate declaration of Polish autonomy. Nothing, therefore, was to be hoped from Czarist Russia; not even military independence. When, on the Revolution and declaration of March 17, 1917, the Poles, at last, were granted independence, and Czardom, the worst enemy, had fallen, Polish regiments began to be formed in Russia herself. Polish soldiers in Russian regiments were drafted into them. It was estimated that over 70,000 Poles were serving the Russians as privates, 20,000 as officers, and 119 as generals.

Of these corps, formed in various parts of the country, the most important was that commanded by the ex-Czarist General Dowbor-Musnicki. Though Kerensky was favourable for a time to Polish formations, he very soon tried to oppress the Polish corps. They turned to France for support.

When the Bolsheviks came into power the position of Polish troops was made particularly difficult. The Bolsheviks, especially their Commander-in-Chief Krylenko, considered them the allies of the capitalist Entente. They began a ruthless war on Polish formations, in which murder, attacks and executions became the order of the day. The Poles tried to fight their way out westwards. But the

treaty of Brest-Litovsk made the nearest western power a Bolshevik ally. After many vain démarches, nothing remained to Dowbor-Musnicki but to let himself be disarmed by the Germans.

A section of his corps had succeeded in escaping eastwards. They united in Murmansk. Here the Poles joined forces with the general in charge of the English expedition. Two divisions put themselves at the orders of the commander of the North-Russian Expeditionary Forces, which at first were led by General Poole, and later by General Ironside. These homeless Poles fought side by side with the English against the Bolsheviks, and earned in the English ranks many "Military Crosses" and "Distinguished Service Orders."

Polish regiments had also been formed in Siberia and along the Black Sea. They fought the Reds in Koltschak's Army or else in the ranks of the Allies.

It went without saying that in France, the country of "traditional" Polish sympathies, some Polish regiments should be formed. An independent Polish army, sprung from very small beginnings, was fully established by the spring of 1918, and fought on the side of France. Poles domiciled in allied countries or in America enlisted in it. Those Poles who, as German or Austrian citizens, had fought in either army and been taken prisoner by the French or the Italians, could re-enlist in these regiments. They were commanded at first by the French General Archinard.

In July 1918 Josef Haller came from Murmansk at the orders of the National Committee. Haller was a native of Galicia, where he had served in the Austrian army and attained captain's rank. At the beginning of the war he had formed along with Pilsudski the second brigade of legions. When the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk be-

came known he fought, after bloody battles with the Austrians, on Russian soil. He succeeded in leading several thousand Polish troops through Russia, and joining the British under General Poole. On arrival in France in the autumn of 1918 he took over the general command of Polish regiments.

The "Armée Polonaise en France" was officially recognized by the Allies. The Foreign Secretary, Balfour, did this in the name of Great Britain, Sonnino in that of Italy, and Lansing for the United States of America.

In Lausanne, in August 1917, a committee (the Komitet Narodow Polski) had been formed for the protection of Polish interests abroad, including those of the Polish army. It soon moved to Paris. Here, till the end of the war, it represented Polish interests with the Entente. This committee, which was normally favourable to the Allies, was composed of Polish politicians who had wanted reconciliation with Russia. Its most prominent members were Count Maurice Zamoyski and Roman Dmowski. This committee, with some reason, believed itself the legal representative of Polish interests in Western Europe. Dmowski was its chairman. Count Wladislaw Sobanski represented it in London, Konstanty Skirmavt in Rome, and Ignacy Paderewski in Washington.

When, in the autumn of 1916, Pilsudski resigned his command and officially ended his military career, he set himself a new task in the mission of Polish freedom. He exchanged military weapons for political. He was invited by both Governors-General of German and Austrian Poland to sit on the newly appointed Council of State.

So war was exchanged for preparation; the soldier went back to politics, as once persuasion had followed battles

and battles persuasion. But the way from open battle into politics was no longer the secret path of conspiracy. These new duties had the sanction of official seals.

Pilsudski accepted the invitation though there were many reasons for refusing it. He certainly saw no possibility of solving the problem of the legions, but he wanted to give himself time in which to strengthen his new and secret force, the P.O.W., time in which the Polish question would automatically come nearer solution. The State Council was an excellent waiting-room. He also saw clearly enough that, in the event of a sudden solution, he would have to be to the fore in Polish politics.

It would have been a mistake to remain in the background at a moment when everything seemed to indicate the possibility of an open decision. When the destinies of Poland hung in the balance, he must not allow himself to be forgotten. If his people were to remember him in the midst of war-time excitement and the hurry of events, he must be there, a living emblem of all that clung to his name. The masses had served his turn; his legions had fulfilled their purpose. For the general public the fact that they existed and had fought was the first step to complete autonomy. Since Pilsudski had created them the kudos of this step were his. Though their material success had not been great, the legions helped to form a legend of which Pilsudski was the hero.

All this had been achieved; he saw no reason against filling in a breathing space with work on the Council of State. He accepted the Governors-General's offer.

When in 1914 he had entered the war against Russia Pilsudski had automatically been considered the ally of Austria and Germany. He depended on the Central Powers for help; with them he had thrown in his lot. But he never

deluded himself into believing that much was to be expected either from the Ballplatz or the Wilhelmstrasse. In the matter of Polish freedom the Central Powers could only vacillate. Germany was full of ingrained mistrust of Poland and a hard prejudice which refused in any way to alter the status of her Polish provinces. But to get Polish troops it was necessary to win Polish sympathy. German policy showed no deep understanding of the very knotty Polish problem. The Germans even deluded themselves into thinking that Poland was their natural ally and anxious to fight for German interests. No trouble, therefore, was taken to study the psychology of a people in whom the ambition of nearly two centuries had necessarily aroused the most egotistical patriotism. This "sacred egotism" would have been willing to choose any method, even that of a false alliance. Poland had as yet no existence as a state or an ordered nation. She acted according to other rules and demanded treatment very different from that of an ordinary ally. German lack of psychological understanding could only antagonize the Poles. Their antagonism was not altogether just. But to German policy it caused many bitter disappointments.

At times the Germans would give weight to the most utterly disproportionate externals. General Moltke wrote to Jagow in Berlin soon after war had broken out: "The Polish insurrection has begun. The ground had been well prepared. Our troops in Poland are already welcomed almost as friends. In Wloclawek, for instance, the inhabitants received them with bread and salt."

While Germans, on the one hand, allowed themselves to take such matters seriously, they delayed, on the other, any action which might have brought a clear solution. As

a rule, of course, it was the army which resolutely opposed all concessions.

When any solution seemed nearer, Austria—at the eleventh hour—would be sure to bring it all to nothing. If Austria had announced her consent, Hungary would at once raise difficulties. When, at the beginning of the war, concessions had been almost obtained, the Austrian High Command opposed them, in particular General von Hötzendorff. Some solution appeared to be in sight in the autumn of 1915. Germany had decided to ratify a scheme for Polish autonomy under the protection of the Austrian throne. Wilhelm II had promised the Austrian Emperor to give his definite assent. Questioned by two Polish archbishops, Franz Josef replied: "Yes, the German Emperor told me that I am to have all Poland." Then Hungary suddenly stepped in and this solution, too, became impossible. Tisza, the Hungarian premier, feared that an independent Poland, if included in the Austrian Empire, would be likely to weaken Hungary. This brilliant and most energetic statesman used every means at his disposal to fight the idea of Polish autonomy. The Throne yielded, and procrastination again became the order of the day. Hindenburg himself, a few years later, wrote that the Polish question should be left as much as possible alone, and handled as a series of delays. And Czernin early in 1917 admitted to the Polish-Austrian Ex-Minister Bilinski that future Polish schemes were out of the question, and that "in relation to Poland Austria's whole policy must be considered as a series of loopholes for any future possibility."

The Powers, in the midst of all these delays, decided to find some positive factor which might bring them the ful-

filment of their hopes, and at the same time leave them free not to commit themselves.

A joint proclamation by the Emperors was made on November 5, 1916. It promised Polish independence. But this proclamation was ill-fated. Polish mistrust had, meanwhile, increased so steadily that nobody put the smallest faith in promises. Too much precious time had been wasted for it ever to have made its effect. The intentions of the Powers were too obvious. They had decided on the proclamation for recruiting purposes.

But the Germans themselves paid small heed to this manifesto. The Poles were by no means trusted. No intelligent politician believed in the success of the Imperial proclamation. Bethmann-Hollweg wrote, a few years later—"To everyone who could think politically it was clear that if we were defeated the coveted Polish divisions, and indeed the whole country, would turn against us. I never had any illusions about that."

In January 1917 the occupation authorities founded a Council of State. It sat in Warsaw, and was intended to enable the Poles to decide internal questions for themselves. Pilsudski was invited to be a member. He accepted, though he did not hope for much from it. When it became sufficiently apparent that this Council, too, would lead him nowhere in the hopeless matter of the legions, he tried to bring the troops of the P.O.W. under its control. He hoped in this way to legalize the P.O.W. and set it on a Polish footing. But the Council did not feel itself strong enough to make any military decisions. Pilsudski saw the uselessness of continuing his membership. In July 1917 he resigned.

In Russia the revolution had destroyed his chief enemy —Czardom. There was therefore no longer any reason for

even the most spurious German alliance. Relationships between the remaining legionaries and the German and Austrian authorities had begun to be very strained. The Central Powers demanded that these men should take an oath of loyalty to the Austrian and German thrones. Pilsudski opposed it. He induced six out of the nine surviving regiments to refuse. The Central Powers interned the Legions; it was the only thing they could do. Pilsudski began to play with the thought of going to Russia and putting himself in command of Polish formations and P.O.W. groups which had sprung up since the Revolution. At their head he could have marched on Poland and cleared out the Germans and Austrians.

It reached the ears of German authorities, that Pilsudski had planned escape to Russia. Friends were to fly him east across the frontier. It also became known in Warsaw that a council of Poles in the Russian army had named Pilsudski General-in-Command of the united forces of Poland. The Powers decided to rid themselves of a dangerous ally; they could not tell whether he was an enemy or a friend. They were afraid, at first, to have him arrested; some pretext would have to be trumped up. When he came to Warsaw with a false passport the authorities had everything they required.

CHAPTER II

FORTRESS

EARLY in the morning of July 22nd Josef Pilsudski was arrested in his house at Warsaw. That same day he was sent into Germany, accompanied by his friend, Colonel Sosnkowski, his former chief of staff. Two gendarmes and a captain went as escort.

The prisoners halted en route in the prisons at Wesel, Spandau and Dantzig. Finally Pilsudski was imprisoned at Magdeburg. On the very first night the friends were separated. He was cut off from all communication from without.

His quarters were a small, one-storied out-building attached to the Magdeburg fortress. The fortress itself, behind high walls, stood on an island in the Elbe. This two-storied guard-house was built in one of its remotest corners. The building, in peace-time, had served as what the Germans called a "Summer-Officer's-Arrest-House." Pilsudski was not awaiting trial; no court had pronounced his sentence; yet they put him under close arrest. The authorities were afraid that he might get into touch with the outside, and begin negotiations with the enemies of the Central Powers. "General" Pilsudski, as they called him, was confined to the little building which the Germans had chosen for his prison. It was composed of several ground-floor rooms and three little rooms above. The guard and the sergeant on duty made use of the ground floor, Pilsudski of the whole top story.

He had had his first taste in the prisons of Dantzig, Wesel and Spandau of imprisonment by German military authorities. He had noticed on the first day at Magdeburg that his gaolers did their best not to annoy him, and to treat him as a prisoner "of rank." He could see that his status in Polish politics and his probable future achievements were being accorded their due. He resigned himself with mixed feelings. His last year had been very full of hard and uninspiring work. He had almost lost his bearings in the maze of the complex situation. At times he had longed for rest and recollection. One evening in the previous summer he had remarked to a friend.—"I ought to be able to lie fallow for about a year. There is nothing I can do at present. I shouldn't object if they shut me up just now."

His two-sided policy in the matter of the legions, which nobody had really understood, his enigmatic bearing on the Council, his apparent connection with the German army and his relationships with the powers in occupation, had diminished his popularity considerably in the course of the previous year. Nobody knew exactly how to take him. Certainly the legions still believed in him, but the public had begun to have its doubts. It looked very like some kind of scandal when the leader of a national army, a popular party idol, was arrested like some callow revolutionary for having used a false passport. But his star was still in the ascendent. Instead of letting him appear as a demagogue of doubtful reputation and basing their action on his passport, the military authorities had made the mistake of making a martyr of him. They might have sent him for trial; instead they had packed him off in secret to a fortress in the interior of Germany. All this confirmed his faith in his star; it furthered his ambition to be the

hero of a necessary legend. They had relieved him of all compromising uncertainties, and given him a long-needed rest. What more could he ask? All those were helping him who imagined themselves his enemies.

In this exile in Magdeburg Pilsudski could discover many parallels to his earlier years as a prisoner. It seemed his fate to spend in prison his days of indecision and uncertainty. His present confinement he felt only took him one more step along a road which he had always trod. And the horizon of his life stretched clear again before his eyes.

But at first he found considerable difficulty in accustoming himself to his new life. After years of intensive and very varied activity, in which he had had to make decisions that affected many thousands of people—years in which Polish history had become identified more and more with his single self, the rest and inactivity of Magdeburg must have been very irksome. He did not believe in any sudden end to the war. And he knew quite well that the Polish question must await the end of the war for its solution. Still it was hard to be cut off from all news of his country except such rare scraps of heavily censored Polish information as the "Magdeburgische Zeitung" afforded him.

Apart from these enervating uncertainties his isolation did not trouble him much. In Siberia, in the Citadel, and in Petersburg, he had learnt the lessons of solitude. He decided to follow a systematic course of mental exercises and recapitulate in thought all the happenings of recent years, while at the same time he strove to reduce the world in which these years had been spent to an ordered and objective critique. He wanted to learn for the future, since never for an instant did he doubt that these Magdeburg

days were more than an interval of rest and preparation for new and greater events.

He strove to see exactly how successful he had been during the years spent in forming his legions, in realizing his projects of military leadership. He analysed his activities as commandant and every battle of his army. And he decided to write the history of the legions.

It was not easy to carry out this resolution. The prisoner was allowed to write no letters; he could possess neither ink nor writing materials. He hoped to achieve his purpose by a ruse. He had learnt that his solitary confinement was illegal. He announced his intention of drawing up a complaint to the authorities on his unauthorized arrest and isolation. His German was imperfect; he would have to make several drafts, and this would mean many sheets of paper. Writing materials were placed at his disposal.

There was, of course, not paper enough to write a book. In style and description Pilsudski had to adapt himself to his materials. He worked several hours a day setting down the main outlines of his conception in small, fine handwriting. Writing filled him with rest and satisfaction. Action, in itself, was not enough. He had to live it over again in words. But it seemed that, except in prison, he could never find time for such occupation.

The curious battle which he had had to fight, as legion commander, a battle spared to the generals of other armies, made him see his military achievements in exaggerated proportions. Here, in these narrow fortress rooms each action the legionaries had fought took on the dimensions of a fantastic and glorious epic. Of his advance on Kielce at the outbreak of hostilities he wrote—"My march on Kielce was one of the most daring achievements of the war." His pride was genuine; he believed. And there had

never been room in him for modesty. As creator of the legions he, naturally, felt responsible for each of their achievements. He *was* the legions; their victories were his. The blind devotion of his officers and men had strengthened his belief in his own heroic mission. The world of realities gave place to a world of ideas.

These rooms had only been built for summer use. In winter they were sometimes unbearably cold. Pilsudski suffered; his health was none too robust. At last the fortress authorities were obliged to allow him to visit a doctor in the town for treatment. Apart from this, the sergeant in charge did his best to make the prisoner as comfortable as conditions would allow. His food was sent in to him from a restaurant. He was permitted, for hours together, to walk up and down in a little garden divided from the rest of the fortress by high palings. "Lights out" came at 10 P. M. In his earliest prison experience he had never had to complain of his gaolers. As he paced the little room through long and solitary evenings, hour after hour, remembering the prisoner of the past, he would see again the Kalmuck face of the soldier who so nearly cracked his skull at Irkutsk; the startled eyes of Siedielnikov, laying his match-box with the letter inside it on the table; Andrei beside him, trying to keep him amused on fearful evenings of madness.

Pilsudski watched these far-off shapes of the past; he lost himself among them more and more. Hard lines of demarcation melted; memories ceased to be nebulous. At times he lived among these images; they were with him in the little rooms. His vivid thought, all the life and colour of his mind, gave reality and form to vanished men. Sometimes he caught himself deep in conversation with ghosts, striving to convince them, trying to let them see his point

of view. He had little need of live men. He had never loved them very much. These others, shaped by his mind —people with whom he conversed in his walks a few yards long—seemed more to his taste than flesh and blood. He could only smile when his thoughts came back to his imprisonment. Was he not born to be a prisoner? Had the actual world ever had much in it to delight him? Every-day things would pass his eyes as they do the eyes of the blind. He was a romantic who loved images more than things. But his romanticism brought him reality. His world of dreams could be made actual.

The void of these first days was thronged with forms; a world in which to be solitary was impossible. He loved to dwell, not only among the ghosts of men, but with remembered phantoms of things. He would sit for hours and meditate each prison that had held him. His thoughts would stray down prison corridors, see the colour of walls, the architecture of prison buildings, see every variety of prison rule. And he would strive through this multiplicity of detail to penetrate to the roots of nations' souls—the nations who had built these gaols, the souls by which these rules had been laid down. With more intense, more shud-dering horror, than ever before, he realized the savage, boundless cruelty of the Czarist soul of Russia; saw once again every torment of a prison system, which seemed to delight, without reason, limitation or object, in the sheer suffering of its victims. A system without any principle, barbarous and confused, which took pleasure in intensify-ing the natural pain of prison life. And he began to real-ize the boundless agony of this soul, which hoped to still its own self-inflicted horror by redoubling the pangs of the weak. He compared this vanished world of eastern prisons with the stern regulations of German arrest. Each

hour of the day was planned. Everything had been made to serve its purpose. It was all inhuman and machine-made, but the lust for suffering was not in it. And it never overstripped the limits of order, either on the side of good or ill.

Dark prisons, with a hundred corridors, clanking steps, the terror which lurked round every corner, had been a good training in confinement. The stern, chill, regulated prison in Magdeburg was a prison for soldiers. In the boundless dark of Russian prison life Pilsudski, the soldier, might have succumbed. In this drilled and ordered fortress he felt himself almost at home.

Time went faster than he had expected. In August 1918 Sosnkowski was suddenly transferred to keep him company. Till then he had been left in Magdeburg in rigorously solitary confinement.

The arrival of Sosnkowski, one of his oldest and closest friends, was the beginning of a new life in common. Pilsudski emerged from the solitude in which he had fought his inward battles to seek recollection and future certainties. A fresh stage began. The presence of another man helped him to surmount his loneliness and recross the bridge into the world.

Sosnkowski submitted to his chief as though they had both been free men. Pilsudski was made to feel himself the master of the house, and treated his "Chief of Staff" as a guest. They resumed old habits to make it easier to get into touch with future normal life. As chief of staff Sosnkowski took on a new lease of life. His commander's presence gave him such a feeling of security that no relationship seemed possible except the relationship of the past. Since he could not actually be on duty, he had to be

content with "platonic" warfare. Maps were nailed to the walls and the two spent hours each day in front of them. Newspaper communiqués enabled them to study the changing situations on the fronts.

As they walked hour by hour in the little garden Pilsudski would eagerly develop his plans for a liberated Poland. He talked of this Poland, not as of something to be desired, but as though it were already a reality. Belief in his country's independence and the preponderant share which he himself would have in it were so much a part of his mind that day by day he loved to make fresh plans, reject the old ones, and take decisions. His chief interest was, of course, the army. He organized the future Polish army down to its minutest details; decided, not merely on its strength and numbers, its training and equipment, but arranged in advance in which parts of the country the various regiments should be stationed.

It was often curious to listen to him. Sosnkowski, in spite of his devotion and boundless trust in his chief, would find it hard at times to resist the very oddest thoughts. This spare man, in his shabby uniform, with his ragged moustache, whose sallow cheeks the previous year had so narrowed, would go up and down the close space between the towering walls of a prison from which he might never be released, losing himself in every detail of a non-existent government and army, which, surely, could have no other reality than in the feverish dreams of prophets or madmen. But he never dared gainsay Pilsudski or disturb him in any of his visions. He remembered the words which another friend had heard Pilsudski speak not long before they arrested him. After a futile evening at cards he had turned to this friend and said—"The Germans are too weak by now to summon up the pluck to

shoot me. They'll probably intern me somewhere. But I shall soon be back. And once I'm back I shall be dictator."

Even friends, in years gone by, had often called Ziuk a madman. They had had to admit, at the end of months, or years, that he had seen the truth and acted wisely. Sosnkowski tried more than once to find answers to this curious riddle. What was it gave Pilsudski the ability not merely to sense a distant future, but to see it there so clearly before him? Was it some kind of hunter's instinct which could scent out the future down many winds? Did pictures, unseen by other men, rise up when he had to take decisions, when in long and solitary meditation he strove to hammer out a true solution? It was often difficult to decide whether one had a madman to deal with or some kind of strange clairvoyant.

When long walks and conversations were at an end and the whole war-area had been studied, the friends would sit down to chess. Each day they played for several hours. Though outwardly Pilsudski seemed at ease and scarcely showed how passionately he followed the game, a sudden oath, an eager intake of cigarette smoke, the deepening cleft between his eyebrows, would betray his rising excitement. If Sosnkowski won, he would take it almost as a personal injury. Chess, for him, was a battle of logic and of strategy. He loathed to be given proof that another man could beat him at the game. And he was not an exceptional chess-player.

Some weeks after Sosnkowski's arrival the prisoners began to notice that the authorities were doing their best to mitigate prison conditions. In the middle of September they received permission to go for walks outside the fortress. An officer was detailed to accompany them; he was to arrange their daily itinerary through the different

quarters of the town and show them all the sights of Magdeburg. He walked with the prisoners; there was a sergeant about fifty paces behind.

The end of September saw the arrival of an unusual visitor, Count Harry Kessler. Kessler was a German officer employed by the government on unofficial diplomatic missions. He was an art-enthusiast and connoisseur; had lived, until the war, in Paris, where he was well-known in artistic circles. He had been one of the first to perceive the talent of Aristide Maillol, the sculptor, had collaborated with Hugo von Hoffmansthal in Richard Strausz's ballet "Joseph," which Diaghileff had staged at the Paris Opera, a famous dilettante, and a man of the widest culture.

He had made Pilsudski's acquaintance in 1915 during the battle of the legions in Wolhynia. Now that crushing defeats in the west had begun to rob the high command of all decision, the Wilhelmstrasse, at the very last hour, was doing its best to save as much as possible of Poland. Reichskanzler's Office had commissioned Kessler to discover Pilsudski's intentions in the course of an unofficial visit. He must find out what Pilsudski's attitude to Germany would be in the case of Polish independence. Moreover, Kessler had been charged with the difficult task of getting Pilsudski to promise that he would refrain from any future aggressive policy. He was to hint that such a promise might lead to the eventual freeing of both prisoners.

Kessler had a shrewder notion of Pilsudski's strength than the Wilhelmstrasse or the Governor-General von Bessler. From the first he had considered their arrest a blunder of the military authorities. He was convinced that this imprisonment would lead to far more harm than

good, and took great pains to disguise his mission and make it look as human as possible. His visit must appear quite casual. He was good-natured enough to bring the kind of presents usually brought to prisoners or invalids. He never guessed that his wine, fruit and chocolates would be handed over to the sergeant as soon as he had taken his departure.

Pilsudski explained that as a prisoner he could make no promises. He refused to change a standpoint which he had taken since the beginning of the war. He had never been hostile to Germany. But his aim was a free, united Poland, whose German frontiers, he supposed, would not be those at present in existence. He naturally could not entertain the suggestion that he should buy his own liberty at a price which the future state would have to pay.

His faith had not been shaken for an instant. He scarcely noticed present realities. Magdeburg and its fortress did not matter. His purpose was the essential thing. It mattered, too, that Germany should have felt his strength, should have turned to him and to none other with demands for a promise about the future.

The weeks after Kessler's visit were unusually difficult to bear. Pilsudski was sterner and more silent than he had been in the whole previous year in gaol. He walked for hours at a stretch, lighting each cigarette from the last, brooding on the position, making plans. War news and articles in the "Magdeburgische Zeitung" made it easy enough to see that the western position was untenable, that this huge fight was nearing its end. So the Polish question, also, must be decided before many days were out.

He began to grow restless. He knew that when the dice fell he must be there. Could the new state be formed with-

out him? When he had waited nearly forty years for this?

He could see the chaos which reigned in Polish opinion, Polish politics—the lack of direction in his country, the difficulties of the whole position in occupied Polish territory. And he knew that there was nobody there with strength enough to master the situation. The tension grew more and more unbearable.

Then came the first call of freedom. It was unexpected: it was part dramatic, part grotesque. One day at the beginning of November an excited sergeant in charge rushed up into the prisoners' room. He waved a salmon-coloured brochure: he shouted—"'Ave yer seen it? 'Ave yer seen . . . ?" and handed the prisoners the latest number of "Die Woche."

Its first page was filled with a huge photograph of Pilsudski: the letter-press beneath it read as follows—"General Pilsudski, the new Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army." A Polish government in Warsaw had named him its Minister for War.

Pilsudski examined the picture on the plain deal table before him. His face grew sterner than ever. He was silent and paid no heed when Sosnkowski did his best to joke at the whole absurd situation.

Some few days later, on November 8th, a sunny, autumn morning, the prisoners, as usual, were pacing their little garden. A sudden violent ringing was heard at the outer gate. Loud disputes and explanations followed. The door was flung back; two men appeared in the door-way. One was in mufti; the other seemed to have stepped off some provincial stage. He wore an old, slouch hat pulled down very far over his eyes, a long, shabby hunting-cloak, and under it a high pair of cavalry boots. This unusual

guest was Count Kessler. He stammered, without time even for greetings—

"Gentlemen, you are free. The Chancellor has authorized me to accompany you to Berlin. Make haste. There's not a moment to lose. Magdeburg is in an uproar. There's a car waiting. Take only the most necessary things. We mustn't delay a second. If we wait I can't guarantee anything."

Up to the rooms above! Everything indispensable was flung into a small attaché case. Then out—into the great courtyard of the fortress.

Troops and sentries, wondering and inquisitive, stared after the little group. Pilsudski wore his grey-blue colonel's uniform. Sosnkowski and Kessler's companion were in mufti. Kessler was neither soldier nor civilian.

They rushed over the bridge across the Elbe. The grey-green Elbe flowed lazily. Down through two streets into a side alley. A car was waiting. Kessler's companion took the wheel. They were off!

Kessler had been in Magdeburg for two days waiting for an order to free the prisoners. This order had been delayed, since the Wilhelmstrasse still hoped to force Pilsudski's written declaration. It was not their intention to annoy him, but they felt that by the use of certain threats something might still be achieved. Vacillation in Polish affairs seemed to hang like fate over the Wilhelmstrasse. When confusion became more and more dangerous, the Reichskanzler's Office had decided to free Pilsudski unconditionally. But before Kessler went to the fortress he learnt that all railway communication had been cut off. He decided to avoid further delay and release Pilsudski forthwith. His friend, Captain von Gülpen, had man-

aged to secure a car. Now they could hurry to Berlin.

Every ten minutes or so there was an explosion. The car was enveloped in smoke, the air filled with a curious stink of burnt potatoes. Gülpen cursed and jumped from the driver's seat. The age of rubber tyres had long since vanished. These were "substitute" tyres. They could not be filled with air, which was replaced by a new invention, an ingenious potato-mixture which, whenever they became overheated, would ooze out over the wretched tyres in a kind of thick, black syrup. This potato-stew episode was repeated several times an hour, to the accompaniment of oaths from Gülpen and much irritation from inside the car.

The afternoon lay bathed in silver. It was warm. Each colour stood out soft and clear against the blue of an almost midsummer sky. Only the crystal air betrayed that the year was on the wane. The indolent brown country stretched around them. A field of late clover here and there made a splash of green among the greyish squares of plough land. Sand-dunes rose at the end of plains. Fir trees in ragged clumps flew past the car. Trees and the earth were peaceful.

It was the afternoon of November 8th.

Pilsudski sat at Kessler's side. He was grim and silent. From time to time he coughed and held up a shabby hat before his mouth to protect him from the rushing draught. He spoke only once. He nudged Kessler and pointed with a slight lift of his hand to the countryside that rushed past the car. He bent and almost whispered in Kessler's ear: "Just look. That's like my country. My home near Vilna is like that. The soil is just as poor. The fir woods there are just as black. But the sand-dunes are a little higher. And

the horizon is far wider." He gazed out over the land. His eyes became as blue and tender as if there had been no war—no Poland— No November the 8th!

Late that afternoon the car, exuding smoke and stench through the remains of its potato stew, trundled into Berlin. Kessler rang up the Wilhelmstrasse at once. Prince Hatzfelt at the end of the telephone replied that the train service with Warsaw was cut off. Rooms for the Poles had been taken in the Hôtel Continental.

After supper Kessler informed Pilsudski that Count Lerchenfeld wanted to speak to him. Lerchenfeld, Germany's accredited representative to the newly-formed Warsaw government, appeared in Pilsudski's suite. He announced that Beseler, the Governor-General, had sent him to Berlin to accompany Pilsudski to Warsaw, but at the last moment he had unfortunately received fresh orders to return to Poland forthwith.

It transpired in the course of conversation that Lerchenfeld had been commissioned to persuade Pilsudski to the declaration at which Kessler had already carefully hinted. But here, in a private suite at the Continental, Pilsudski felt as much master of the situation as he had been a few days previously in the bare fortress-room in Magdeburg. He declared quite definitely that he could make no promises and enter into no negotiations. If he had known that his freedom depended on some declaration on his part he would have refused to be set free. Moreover he hoped, within the next few days, to have the pleasure of speaking in person to His Excellency the Governor-General of Warsaw.

Early next morning Count Kessler came to the hotel, and asked Pilsudski and Sosnkowski to lunch

with him. Till then the prisoners could do as they liked.

Pilsudski had no civilian clothes, and did not want to leave the hotel without a sword. Sosnkowski requested Kessler to provide one. But all armament shops were closed: a sword was unprocurable. As a souvenir of their days together Kessler handed Pilsudski his own regulation sword, which he had worn for the last four years in the field.

Pilsudski, dressed in his shabby legion uniform, an Imperial German cavalry sword by his side, walked down Unter den Linden on the morning of November 9th. When he reached the Pariser Platz with Sosnkowski the paper boys were shouting the news. "Habdication of the Emperur! Habdication!"

At about two o'clock they lunched at Hillers. Besides Kessler, the host, and the chief guests, Pilsudski and Sosnkowski, there were present Prince Hatzfelt and Captain von Gülpen. They lunched by electric light in a private room at the back of the restaurant. The thick curtains were drawn; no noise could penetrate the quiet, far too opulent, room. Waiters, in immaculate swallowtails, served with all the perfection of good training. Nothing gave any indication that the world had begun to move a little faster than usual.

The meal began in an atmosphere of forced good-will. Pilsudski, who never felt particularly at ease behind cut-glass and gleaming silver, saw nothing in this meal but a stupid and purposeless comedy, which he would very much rather have been spared. He was feverishly impatient. He must and would get to Warsaw, yet here, after more than fifteen months in a bare fortress-room, they set him down before an elaborate table gleaming with snow-white damask in one of the smartest Berlin restaurants, as

though these were the most piping times of peace and he had been asked to celebrate somebody's birthday. Surely all this was nothing but a farce. This room, bathed in soft, electric light—this elaborate menu, with every kind of recherché "substitute" food, this German "distinction" with its worn and very faultless social traditions, which for the moment seemed idiotic and superfluous; this Kessler, who tried so hard to be a perfect host and at the same time a true friend—von Gülpen joking to break the ice—

And then Sosnkowski and himself, in their shabby tunics, with their restlessness and the immense distance which cut them off from their hosts.

Pilsudski sat without a word. Sosnkowski, also, was taciturn. Only after Hatzfelt had been called to the telephone and returned announcing grave news from the Wilhelmstrasse did Sosnkowski begin to thaw. His sense of humour was suddenly tickled by the whole tragi-comic situation. It amused him to see the officials and authorities of a country which had imprisoned him for more than a year, so worried. This drama, played on German soil, aroused a spectator's curiosity. It was curious to sit among the actors.

He knew that now his hosts were thinking of anything rather than this extraordinary meal, and could scarcely wait till it was over. They had just had very serious news. They sat dumb and seemed quite to forget to keep things going. Now, if ever, was the time to begin a really lively conversation.

He went from subject to subject; cracked joke after joke, used every art of conversation, the small talk of the best Polish drawing-rooms. The parts had been exchanged.

Hatzfelt was called to the telephone a second time. He returned to announce that revolution had broken out in

Berlin. The Wilhelmstrasse desired Pilsudski to leave for Warsaw immediately. Thanks to Kessler's previous efforts, a train had, at last, been procured. It would leave Berlin in just an hour.

An hour later Pilsudski, Sosnkowski, Kessler and von Gülpen were sitting in a first-class carriage, which followed an engine eastwards. Evening became night; hour after hour passed over the four travellers' heads. They could neither sleep nor talk. No other train was running in all Germany that day. Only this single first-class carriage, with the prisoner Joseph Pilsudski, General-in-Chief of the Polish Army.

The train drew up at Warsaw in the early hours of morning. A crowd, a hundred thousand strong, was round the station:—"Poland's martyr—her hero and leader"—had come back.

Students chaired Pilsudski into the town. The day was November the 10th.

CHAPTER III

PADEREWSKI

WHEN they sang at Paderewski's cradle the good fairies never prophesied that one day he would do battle for Polish right as a statesman.

He was born on November 6, 1860 on a Podolian estate—the son of Jan Paderewski, its agent. His mother was the daughter of a Professor Nowicki, a Pole from Vilna, who had been sent into banishment in Siberia. She died a few months after the birth of her son, Ignacy Jan.

Ignacy loved music from the first, and as a small boy he began to take piano lessons. At twelve he was ready to go to the Warsaw Conservatoire, though here he was not considered especially gifted.

But he possessed great natural industry, and, moreover, he had faith in himself. He studied piano and composition. These early years were years of work and music.

His life in Warsaw was hard and full of privations; Paderewski, as a rule, had scarcely money enough to buy himself a glass of tea. Not till Kerntopf, the piano-maker, had begun to take a fancy to him did matters become any easier.

Kerntopf had several daughters. These girls became very susceptible to the young and auburn-haired pianist. They made their father ask him to dinner every day.

So Paderewski could reckon on getting one meal a day at least. Their father's friendship and the fluttering hearts

of the young ladies kept him from complete starvation. At twenty he married. Kerntopf's bounties came to an end, and poverty à deux began. His young wife died soon after she had borne him a son. Then his financial position began to improve. Paderewski secured piano lessons. He scraped a few pence together and went to Berlin to study composition with Friedrich Kiel. At twenty-four he went to Vienna to Leschetitski. Teachers and fellow-students saw at once how much talent there was in this newcomer. Paderewski gave a few concerts, at which he played a series of his own compositions. But neither composer nor pianist could arouse the half-empty concert hall.

Then suddenly he began to succeed. At one of Pauline Lucca's concerts Paderewski had been engaged to fill up intervals between the "Lieder" of the celebrated singer. The surprised public suddenly began to listen. The sensitive ear of Vienna was aware of an unexpected talent. Lucca's concert became Paderewski's. His first success was upon him. He moved to Paris; his fame increased. His concerts became paying propositions. The young Pole succeeded in charming both Bohemian and social Paris. Musical Paris, with Gounod at its head, saw in this new talent a revelation.

London was more reserved. It received him without enthusiasm. His first London concerts were given to an empty hall. Most newspapers pooh-poohed the new pianist. Then Paderewski advised Daniel Mayer, his agent, to bring out all his press-notices, especially the bad London ones, as a circular.

This London slating awakened provincial interest. The provinces refused, in matters of art, and especially in matters of music, to let London impose her standards. These provincial concerts were an overwhelming success. Now

London, too, was forced to abandon her reserve. Paderewski's concerts became "the thing."

His unusual appearance aroused at least as much interest as his art. He was invited everywhere; London hostesses began to find him indispensable. Ladies of imperfect hearing enthused about "romantic" Polish music, and rushed to the Encyclopædia Britannica to collect materials for polite little talks about his country.

The capital of the world had accepted him. Alma-Tadema, Burne-Jones, and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, insisted on his sitting for his portrait.

Paderewski, somewhat amused, but not in the least disconcerted, was aware that he had conquered Europe. He was scarcely more than thirty.

In 1893 he made his first American tour. In New York success was instant and sensational. But the American provinces were unconquered. Tours through the huge continent followed. The provinces did not always agree with New York.

It was a custom in the smaller towns that music-lovers should guarantee the concerts of any unknown musician, and undertake his whole risks. In a small California town two students guaranteed the unknown Pole. They bought his first concert for a lump sum of $2000.

A thunderstorm broke, almost as if it had cancelled the arrangements, shortly before the doors were opened. Clouds deluged the wretched little town; rivers overflowed, and flooded every road that led to the concert hall. Neighbouring farmers, who would otherwise have composed the audience, were none of them able to arrive. Not a seat in the hall was taken.

The organizer declared himself willing to bear $200 of the loss. But still the students had $1800 to make

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up. Paderewski learnt this, and offered at once to pay half. They accepted, and this began an American friendship.

More than a quarter of a century later Paderewski, as Prime Minister of Poland, received a consignment from America of two Cadillac cars—a present from Mr. Herbert Hoover, one of the students who had guaranteed the concert.

In 1899 Paderewski's gigantic profits enabled him to buy a large estate in Switzerland—Riond Boisson, near Morges, in the neighbourhood of Lausanne, the property of Comte Le Marois. In the same year he married his second wife, the Baroness Rosen, the daughter of a Polish family from the Baltic province. He began to spend his summers in Switzerland. Riond Boisson became an artistic centre. Each year, on July 31st, the feast of Paderewski's patron saint, guests arrived from all over the world. The singer, Marcella Sembrich-Kochanski, Alma-Tadema's daughter Laurence, Arthur Nikisch, Weingartner, Josef Hofmann, and Leopold Stokowski were among his closest friends. He had become acquainted with many European and American celebrities. He was one of the world's most popular artists.

Statesmen and financial magnates were as eager to make his acquaintance as prima donnas, society women and the leaders of Bohemia. When he entered a theatre people all over the house would rise and stare. Those who did not know who he was would be highly amused at his appearance; his friends saw a further proof of genius in each new idiosyncrasy. He was the idol of caricaturists. It was impossible to forget this figure. His red locks were in themselves a sensation; they were at once a challenge and a crown. His disarming smile was the smile of some poet-

created hero. His throat was slender, his hands very pale. Ladies would declare they were transparent. On his fiery locks, a hat, incredibly small, caused amusement. Low collars left his whole throat bare; primrose-coloured shirts of shantung silk, a white tie, a long white waistcoat, enhanced his curious charm. He stood out, quite unforgettably, inviting comparisons with the most exotic, tropical flowers. Great virtuosi might have modelled their appearance on his. He was renowned, envied, rich—but every day he did scales and worked as hard as a beginner.

He would go on endless tours through the East, America, South Africa, Australia. He had played to every royalty in Europe. Princesses of the blood would boast for weeks that they had had him next them at dinner. He had written an opera, "Manru," and the managements of all the great opera houses hastened to put it on the stage. Its première was in Dresden. Then came New York, with Philadelphia, Boston, Warsaw and Chicago. Yet he found time for Polish politics.

Years ago his father had lain in prison awaiting trial, accused of having conspired to free Poland. His country's struggle for independence was a living thing for Paderewski. His mother had been born in Siberia; such memories do not easily fade. He had written in an album the words—"La patrie avant tout; l'art ensuite." What he had written he believed. He could have given no better definition of a Polish artist's relationship to art. Yet even this poet, this artist to whom beauty had become an obsession, suffered with the suffering of Poland. The Polish spirit had always surrendered willingly to the compelling inspiration of patriotism. Poles would die gaily, and with a gesture, in answer to the words "my country." In the

Polish soul the nationalist idea was strength and weakness. The most glorious deeds to which a people can rise had been done in their nation's cause by Poles. Heroism or instant sacrifice, the highest endurance and courage, could instantly be roused if the word "country" inspired them.

On Paderewski, too, the years had laid the enchantment of supreme patriotism. "La patrie avant tout." What moved him most in Chopin had been his great countryman's limitation as well as his sublimest strength; his tears for Poland—his yearning ecstasy over a country for ever lost. Patriotism had always inspired him; he had struck its note again and again in rhythms and peasant airs. At last it invaded his daily life.

He entered the arena of Polish affairs for the first time in 1910. Ostensibly he came as an artist, though he used the art of another. But art had ceased to be his chief purpose; it had become nothing more than a pretext. He had commissioned a young sculptor, Antony Wiwulski, to execute a gigantic monument. He intended to present it to Cracow, and through Cracow to the whole of Poland. It was to commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the Polish victory over Prussia at Grünwald in 1410. The monument was unveiled before thousands of people gathered from every part of the country.

Paderewski spoke at its unveiling. He revealed exceptional gifts as a speaker. Here stood a man whose speech was art, a man who could handle words as dexterously as a jewel-cutter; take fire from the glitter of each and enhance it in double splendours—an orator of shaped and tempered phrases, an artist full of delight in a new medium.

Though his active life of tours and star engagements

continued, Paderewski grew more and more preoccupied with the political situation of his country, more engrossed in the Polish question.

Friends came to Riond Boisson, as usual, to keep his "feast-day" in the July of 1914. Roman Dmowski among them.

When war broke out Riond Boisson became a centre of Polish activities, and the meeting-place of most Polish politicians abroad.

Towards the end of the year, with the assistance of Henryk Sienkiewicz, the author of "Quo Vadis," who lived in Vevey, Paderewski organized a Polish "Committee of Aid." It was to bring Poland help from outside, politically, socially, financially, and, later, with military reinforcements. Paderewski decided to go to America to lay wider foundations to its activities.

Three million Poles, when war broke out, were living in the United States as American citizens. Eighty thousand of these Poles were members of a semi-military organization, the Union of Polish Sokols. At Pittsburgh, on April 4, 1917 these Polish Sokols decided to recruit a Polish American army, which should fight on the French side. But soon after this American law made military service compulsory. The Polish army had become a thing of the past.

It was decided to concentrate on getting all auxiliaries of the Polish army into France. These auxiliaries were trained in close co-operation with the American War Office, on Canadian soil, at Niagara-on-the-Lake. They were shipped to France 20,000 strong. The whole undertaking had been placed unconditionally in the hands of a Polish military commission, which took its orders from

Polish official representatives in America, of whom Paderewski had been made head.

At the time he came to America the United States had still been neutral. He confined his energies, therefore, to collecting funds, and devoted himself to propaganda for Poland and Polish independence. In the first months he gave concerts, and their huge receipts went to swell the funds of his committee. After a long struggle with himself he decided to give up music and think only of the Polish cause. His knowledge of American conditions had shown him that public speaking would be his most effective propaganda. He spoke English almost as fluently as Polish, and would have found no difficulty in using it extempore in public. But he determined to become quite perfect, and took two English lessons a week. He also began to learn Spanish, to be able to talk freely to representatives of the South American Republics.

During these first two years in the States, he spoke all over the country. He made over 300 speeches—at universities, in clubs, to women's associations, political meetings, business men, soldiers, students and workmen. He was the personal friend of many of America's chief statesmen and the leaders of American life, and these friendships were especially useful. His American prestige was immense. When the Paris National Committee begged him to represent it he accepted, and in America the political activities of Poles were soon centred round his house in New York.

At the end of 1917 Colonel House told Paderewski in confidence that President Wilson had decided on an appeal to all nations. Paderewski's political intelligence was acute, he saw at once his opportunity for presenting the

Polish case seriously and effectively to the world. He endeavoured to persuade House that the President's appeal must touch on the Polish question. The Colonel, after a long conversation, agreed to submit his suggestion to Mr. Wilson. But to avoid approaching his chief with empty hands he begged Paderewski to draw up a report for the President. When Colonel House had taken his leave Paderewski sat down to his desk, and worked on for nearly thirty-six hours at a memorandum on the necessity for a united and independent Polish State. By the following day the document was in Mr. Wilson's hands.

Soon after this, on January 8, 1918 the President announced his fourteen points. The thirteenth was devoted solely to the necessity for an independent Poland.

The road was clear. On June 3rd Lloyd-George, Clemenceau and Orlando could give at the request of the "National Committee" in Paris a solemn declaration that "the creation of a united and independent Polish state with free access to the sea, is a necessary condition to any just and lasting European peace."

When hostilities ceased Paderewski decided to return as soon as possible to Poland. He left America and went to London. There, in official circles, he was informed that Poland could only count on being allowed to send her delegates to the Peace Conference if the country had succeeded in forming a government which could be said to represent the whole nation. Paderewski saw the significance of his mission. He was the herald of peace to his country. He was firmly convinced that he would be able to shape the unity necessary to have Poland worthily represented in the concert of European powers.

He left England for Dantzig on the British warship "Concorde," with a party of English officers conducted

by Colonel Wade. From there, via Posen, he reached Warsaw. He entered the city eight weeks after Pilsudski.

Pilsudski, meanwhile, had been made head of the new state. When, on November 10th, he entered Warsaw, he found Poland on the verge of chaos. The Germans were without leadership. Von Bessler, the German governor, had quietly left Warsaw. Some hundred thousand German troops were still in occupation of Polish soil. Government was in the hands of a council of Regency, installed by the powers in occupation in the autumn of 1917, and composed of Kakowski, the Archbishop of Warsaw, Prince Zdozislaw Lubomirski and a Mr. Ostrowski.

During its term of office the council had appointed ministers for the conduct of home affairs. In reality their power was nominal. The nearer the war drew to its conclusion the hotter became dissensions at home. Socialists and National Democrats were beginning to gain the upper hand. In Lublin a separate government had been formed under the leadership of the socialist Daszynski. It opposed the authority of Warsaw, and itself declared Polish independence. No personality was strong enough to unite the excited people.

Then Pilsudski reappeared in Warsaw. He alone possessed authority and fame—such strength as not even his enemies could gainsay. The council at once made over its power to him and nominated him head of the state and general-in-command of Polish forces. His army was composed of the remnants of various legions and P.O.W. troops. It was strong enough to effect German disarmament, though Germans, in any case—except for the Posen regiments—did not attempt any opposition. The Armis-

tice and the German revolution had filled the men with only one thought—to get home as quickly as possible. But German regiments in Lithuania, the Ukraine, and other eastern territory, were more dangerous to this new and feeble state.

The reorganization of transport to repatriate German divisions was one of Pilsudski's first tasks. And his own army had to be in readiness. Thousands of irregulars, as well as of authorized regiments, were beginning to invade Polish territory. Lemberg and half Galicia were in Ukrainian and partly, also, in Bolshevist hands. A war in the east was drawing near.

Pilsudski had been invested with the highest authority in the country under the title "Naczelnik Panstwa," Chief of State. There was no constitution yet; he was dictator "by the will of the people." Above all it was necessary to form a government. To this task Pilsudski appointed Moraczewski, an old socialist comrade. But Moraczewski feared responsibility and withdrew. Pilsudski saw with astonishment his very first measure threatened and opposed by an old friend. He was enraged. He would break this opposition. When Moraczewski came to announce his refusal Pilsudski's mind was made up. He was commander-in-chief of an army in which Moraczewski had served as officer. He would show him now what command of an army implied. He ordered him to stand to attention.

The astonished Moraczewski was told to put his thumbs to his trouser seams, and instructed by his superior officer to proceed to the formation of a cabinet. The cabinet was formed.

The government's chief business was the preparation of a franchise system to elect the first Polish 'Sejm" or parlia-

ment. It was composed of left wing politicians and never became really popular.

The National Democrats, who opposed Pilsudski and the socialists, had had their prestige increased by Allied victories. They felt they had a right to share in the government of the country, and did all they could to discredit the new régime.

And abroad the socialist government had no power, since the Paris committee had become Poland's foreign representative. Moraczewski was unacknowledged by any state. Germany was the only country which sent its ambassador to Warsaw. Suddenly, in the middle of November, Count Kessler had made his appearance in the quality of "Ambassador Extraordinary." The government was at a loss to know what to do with him. In East Poland, ready for action, was a German force, over 200,000 strong. It was impossible, therefore, to give the new ambassador the cold shoulder. But it was equally impossible to receive him, since by so doing the Poles would have shown disloyalty to the Allies, whose peace treaty with Germany was still unsigned. Moreover, to have acknowledged the ambassador would have made it impossible for Poland to take her place on the Allied side at the Conference table. The National Democrats agitated against Kessler and the government. At that moment Paderewski arrived from London.

Immediately on his arrival, he was to meet the head of the state. All Poland watched the pair in expectation. Now that Paderewski was in Warsaw the country had divided into camps, each of which, in one of these two men, saw the true hero of Poland. They had never met, though they had heard of one another for years. Paderew-

ski felt that Pilsudski was an adventurer of genius, an ex-political prisoner. But he was far too intelligent, had too fine a sense of the exceptional, not to recognize a personality and a leader. Others had described this leader's strength, his magnetic hold over crowds. They had told of the glamour, and with it, for the moment, of the power, which legend had built up around Pilsudski. Here was a man he must use, if the country were to be welded into unity. He would have to join forces with him that Poland might fulfil her aspirations, tread paths which should lead to European prestige. He had already decided, even before arrival in Warsaw, to co-operate with Pilsudski and get him to endorse his policy.

For Pilsudski he was a musical genius. Pilsudski saw in Paderewski a celebrity first and foremost. But he doubted the musician's statesmanship. Paderewski stood for the National Democratic Committee in Paris. He was the friend of Roman Dmowski, his old enemy. Pilsudski loathed Dmowski; despised the Committee. And he felt a rival power, whose reputation and brilliance might possibly diminish his popularity. Nobody, as yet, in the new state, had ever been able to get to grips with him. No other Polish name was so glamorous, or so renowned, as his own. Yet here was this pianist, with all his reputation and charm, ready to capture popular sympathies.

But Pilsudski knew that Paderewski was a force to reckon with; that, outside Poland, the musician's immense prestige could do more to assist the Polish cause than the united efforts of politicians. Not that foreign affairs really interested him. But this was the eve of the Peace Conference, due within the next few days. No one could be fitter than Paderewski to represent Poland at Versailles. Co-operation was inevitable. He would have to make use

of this pianist, win, and, in the end, dominate. And he understood the art of winning men. Moreover, he admired Paderewski's patriotism and self-sacrifice. Whoever had made sacrifices for Poland could be sure of Pilsudski's respect.

Pilsudski and Paderewski met. Grey daylight filled the room. Behind the window-panes black trees, the trees of the Belvedere garden. Crows hovered over the snow flats of the park. The low grey sky hung like a cloth.

The men eyed one another. Paderewski came through the door with a light tread, as glowing as a foreign bird; bright, cordial, exotic. A pale face, a very high, white forehead, his long grey hair still flecked with coppery light; his eyes a little narrowed—the eyes of a clever faun. His mouth was feminine, conciliatory, candid, gracious. He was dressed with care; low collar, bow, silk shirt, white waistcoat. Certainly a very delightful figure.

Paderewski glanced at the chief of the new state in his shabby, grey-blue legion tunic; his black hair stiff above his forehead, thick eyebrows over dark, alert eyes; his hidden mouth with its grey-streaked, ragged, drooping moustache: his chin thrust out.

They began to talk; each tried to draw the other out and charm him. Paderewski's clear, trained voice flowed on peacefully and evenly, gruffly broken by Pilsudski's baritone.

By the time the conversation ended the chasm between the two was vast. It was not merely politics that separated. The talkers were men of different worlds. The one, from childhood up had been accustomed to act and plan in darkness; to turn words into riddles; seek, in emotions, hidden causes; an opponent in every friend, in every opponent an enemy; to keep himself eternally concealed.

The other had developed with the eyes of a world upon him. His battles had been fought out beneath the shining arc lamps of publicity; he had been pampered—surrounded with light.

His work was the possession of all. His life had been no dark rebellion, but a thing of gleaming proportions; beautiful expression had been its beginning and its end; an ordered rhythm, a progress through the open world. When Paderewski left the Belvedere Palace, the seat of this Chief of State, he decided to leave Warsaw. The position would have to be considered. It seemed scarcely possible to work with this man at once. Paderewski had sensed the other's incredible pride, his fanatical trust in himself. He shuddered as he felt his powerful will, a will in which there seemed the strength to crush rocks or shiver steel.

They must fight; they could never work side by side. And yet—why not? Paderewski's pride was touched, his belief in his task, his mission. Had he not, in an act of sheer faith, sacrificed to build up this new country his art and everything it meant to him? He could not turn back, even if the road were blocked with granite. His conscience was clear. If it should come to a struggle the weapons that he used would be unstained. And why should he not be the winner? Was he less than this sinister Chief of State?

Paderewski's ostensible reason for leaving Warsaw was a conspiracy against Pilsudski and the government. The conspirators were to act the following night. Its leaders were National Democrats or closely associated with the party. Prince Eustachy Sapiëha was its head. The leaders saw "their man" in Paderewski, and tried to induce him to join them. But Paderewski shrank from beginning his political career at home by means of a coup d'état. He

went away; where, nobody knew. Some friends suggested Hungary. He slept that night in Cracow.

The conspirators' first attempt was to arrest the Chief of Staff, General Szeptycki. As Szeptycki was going to bed in his room in the Hôtel Bristol he heard sudden voices in the corridor. He pulled back the door, half-dressed. There stood several young officers, apparently to arrest the general. Szeptycki saw the position at a glance. He drew himself up and glared.

" 'Tention! Right turn!" he commanded.

The officers wavered. They stood to attention—turned, Szeptycki ordered them under arrest; they were led off. A childish rebellion of half-formed politicians and lieutenants was at an end.

In the meantime Pilsudski had learnt that Paderewski had gone to Cracow. He ordered Szeptycki to follow immediately and bring him back. In the early morning of January the 6th Szeptycki reached Paderewski's hotel. It was 5 A. M. But he forced his way into Paderewski's bedroom and discharged Pilsudski's commission. Paderewski's first question was "The conspiracy?" That, heaven be praised, had failed. A weight disappeared from his mind. Of course he would come back and work in conjunction. His rival had made them drag him out of bed to offer him a share in the government. He had not reckoned on so speedy a victory.

In the early morning a special train left Cracow. Paderewski, General Szeptycki, Mme. Paderewski and the secretary Strakacz returned to Warsaw.

Pilsudski had seen that for the moment Paderewski was the only Pole with enough popularity to enable him to unite all parties and speak for his country at Versailles. He asked Paderewski to form a government. Paderewski,

though a great patriot, a brilliant speaker, an able diplomat, had taken no part in home affairs. He did not feel sure of himself, and turned to Dmowski in Paris for advice before accepting Pilsudski's offer.

The Paris committee, with Roman Dmowski at their head, were abroad the sole Polish representatives who enjoyed the full confidence of the Allies. Paderewski, who had the deepest regard for Dmowski and was on the closest terms with the committee, considered it his duty not to act without previous understanding. He was not, himself, a National Democrat. He stood outside all parties, but this party was his favourite spiritually, and to some extent politically. He considered himself Dmowski's disciple in politics. Dmowski wired advice to accept; Paderewski agreed to form a government.

On January 17th he became Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. He hoped in this way to smooth out differences which had arisen from the fact that the Paris committee had considered itself co-equal with Pilsudski.

Pilsudski could see that it was wisest to leave Polish affairs at the Conference entirely in the committee's hands. At a moment when, for the first time in over a century, Poland was to be recognized as a state, internal dissensions must be forgotten. Paderewski and Dmowski were appointed to lead the delegation and represent Pilsudski's government. Paderewski had to leave Warsaw for Paris on the day after he came into office. He appeared in the arena of politics as official representative of Poland.

When, on the first day of the Conference, Paderewski descended from his car as it drew up before the steps at Versailles he caused more excitement to journalists and photographers than even such political celebrities as

Clemenceau and Lloyd-George. They smiled at this unusual figure. As young men they had known the great pianist. They were tempted now to make fun of this eccentric celebrity, who had exchanged the key-board for the Conference table. Moreover, the new prime minister was the last delegate to arrive. He had been a little late in starting.

Pilsudski's instinct had not betrayed him when it prompted him to entrust Paderewski with the foreign interests of his country. His choice had not been determined solely by Paderewski's patriotism. His extensive connections, personal no less than political, would further the cause of the Versailles delegate. But Paderewski brought more than political contributions. He possessed an instinct, of immense service in the political and diplomatic game, a vivid sense of realities, which loved to consider events in all their bearings. His knowledge, though unco-ordinated, was many-sided and profound.

His musical training had schooled his memory; it enabled him to systematize and render scientific any interest, geographical, historical or political; it prevented his mind from becoming overburdened with detail, since everything arranged itself almost musically. His thorough professionalism, his immense capacity for work distinguished him from the mass of his countrymen. He was never content to be an amateur. Many other Poles professed a traditional, at times very brilliant, dilettantism. Paderewski, as the result of the drudgery of several decades, had developed his gifts to the full, and no half-successes would satisfy him. Patience and self-discipline, had come to him from daily, systematic hour-long practice. This had taught him to construct from sure foundations. His training was that of any executant,—a virtuoso, a juggler, an acrobat,

a discipline in toil which few other people have achieved. It had done more than make his fingers obedient; it had taught him to control his mind and will. The precision of counterpoint had trained him in accuracy of thought, in accuracy in the use of words. His exceptional memory, clear expression and controlled, passionate artistry made an enthralling political orator. The Salle des Glaces, crowded with statesmen and famous speakers, sat hushed whenever the Polish pianist spoke. He was as fluent in French as he was in either Polish or English, and could therefore give his words every nuance, each freedom of improvisation, and redouble the conviction of an argument. He seldom spoke without full preparation. His artistic conscience forbade all improvisation in the matter of responsible acts. On nights before a great speech he would lock himself into his bedroom at the Ritz and often work on into the small hours, filing and shaping. Sometimes, next day, before he delivered it, he would go through his speech again with Dmowski.

Opponents, even, who had smiled at this pianist-politician, were obliged to acknowledge his statesmanship. Lansing, whom Paderewski had known in America, and who had all the professional's dislike of emotional "untrained" amateurs, little by little, took back all his earlier criticism:

"My second impression—was that Ignace Paderewski was a greater statesman than he was a musician, . . . a sagacious diplomat. . . . He made few mistakes and he never seemed to be in doubt as to the course which he should take. He was wonderfully resourceful and apparently had an instinctive sense of the possible and the practicable. . . . He was not carried away with extravagant hopes of unrealizable dreams. His views were essentially sane and logical. . . . He showed a poise of

character in dealing with subjects vital to the future of Poland, a conservative judgment and an . . . unexcitable manner of discussing matters of difference, which gave weight to his words and added greatly to his influence as a negotiator. What Mr. Paderewski has done for Poland will cause eternal gratitude. . . . It is a fortunate nation indeed, which can claim such a man among its sons. . . . In history . . . there will always live two Paderewskis, Paderewski the master of music, and Paderewski the statesman of Poland."

Saint-Saëns, the composer, had said many years before this—"Paderewski is a genius, who happens to play the piano."

Though by nature romantic, Paderewski had schooled himself in the matter-of-fact tradition of the west. Rigorous self-discipline, combined with his artistic training, had given him that sense of realities indispensable for the attainment of any great political aim. The emotional nature of a virtuoso applied itself to the positive tasks of politics.

At Versailles Paderewski's many friendships were again particularly useful. Lloyd-George, even, who from the first represented an anti-Polish element, was so charmed by this Pole that he would help him whenever he could. He certainly did not do this for the sake of Poland, or for love of the Polish delegation. This fiery Welshman detested Roman Dmowski with the whole force of his temperament; he heard that he had spread stories of a rather unorthodox kind about his private life in Paris. But, in spite of his personal dislike for the leader of the Polish delegation, Lloyd-George would warn Paderewski each time the Big Four seemed likely to make an anti-Polish move. At such times he would call him up, in the

middle of the night if necessary, and advise him what steps to take to eventually ward off the danger.

In Paris all the gifts of this great artist obtained their fullest recognition, in Poland he failed from the beginning. There was no place in Warsaw for this temperament schooled by the west. And here, too, his limitations became apparent. In Paris it had been less easy to show them, but the peculiar complications of the party system, the incapacity of most party leaders, their personal differences and intrigues, demanded a man of special strength and ruthlessness. Paderewski, as Prime Minister, found difficulty in holding his own. He trusted men too much, and knew human nature too little, to find his way about in this maze. His assistants were for the most part ill-chosen, and Paderewski never discovered their faults. As a speaker, too, he was unequal to the situation of home. Though on red-letter days he could rouse, inspire, and set forth lucidly, he was helpless in ordinary debate. Here, where polished speech was less effective than quick and decisive repartee, he would be lost. The first parliament of the Sejm, elected soon after he left for Paris, became unmanageable. He felt neither the strength nor the right to oppose the people's representatives. And now he was faced with all the difficulties inseparable from the systematized routine of Prime Minister. He could not get accustomed to them with the best will in the world. A certain outward untidiness, which till now had been no hindrance in a life mentally so ordered, became painfully apparent in matters of ministerial business. Time, which before had been a rhythm, but never an inconvenient reality, became something veritably hostile; punctuality at Cabinet meetings, interviews or official receptions, almost insurmountably difficult.

A long life of the most complete independence had developed a number of habits which the Prime Minister found it hard to break. Cabinet meetings would often last well on into the small hours, and would force him to rise very late. He would refuse—for even the most urgent ministerial or diplomatic interview—to give up his twenty minutes or so gymnastic exercises. Appointments and affairs of state could never outweigh in importance an energetic massage with a chamois leather glove soaked in eau de Cologne.

The realities of daily business became as nothing once the doors of his bedroom and dressing-rooms were closed. Here Ignacy Paderewski ruled and was ruled in turn by a hundred and one little despotisms of private habit. Colleagues, Polish or foreign, had ceased to be beings of sufficient reality to cause the Prime Minister to scamp one detail of his scrupulous morning toilet. That deliberate, ordered, continually reconsidered levée was a ceremony which had to be gone through with due seriousness in a spirit of inspired devotion.

Only his good-nature, the sweetness of his disarming personality, made it possible for colleagues and secretaries to work on well after midnight without a murmur. Paderewski spent nearly the whole day in the great corner-room of his hotel, the Bristol, which belonged to him and into which he had settled with his staff of assistants and secretaries. He would often work fifteen hours a day. An occasional motor drive round Warsaw was the one relaxation he allowed himself; yet, when the day's work was at an end, there was a fresh, unscaled mountain of tasks. Political and administrative difficulties seemed daily more insurmountable and numerous.

The Chief of State was one of the greatest. Pilsudski

would call on Paderewski at every hour of the day or night, or he would summon the Prime Minister to discuss some burning question. The discussion, as a rule, became a Pilsudski monologue.

Yet Pilsudski still did his best to win the Prime Minister to his side, used every means to frighten or to charm him. And he tried, with candid strength, to impress Paderewski with his splendours.

Paderewski was often forced to leave his bed and hurry to the Belvedere. There, in the small hours, after a brief talk on affairs of State, he would listen to stories of the legions. Those usually selected were concerned with the Pilsudski legend; they stressed Poland's belief in her leader.

The end would only come in the grey light of breaking dawn. There would be nothing to show but two empty tea glasses, innumerable rounds of lemon-peel; two ash-bowls filled to the brim with cigarette ends.

These conversations scarcely ever led to an agreement. These men could rarely meet on the same plane of understanding. For Pilsudski every event was something personal; he was a stranger to all objectivity. Moreover, he spoke in tortuous and complicated sentences, which, though they showed an unusual and intensive power of thought, gave Paderewski glimpses of a strange and unattractive world. He himself was used to clear speech; he strove to express his opinion in ordered and lucid argument. His reasonings were too matter-of-fact and obvious to make much appeal to Pilsudski's profound and many-branching intellect. They did not interest the Chief of State, who would strive after the unobvious and the hidden, who looked far off for his premisses, gave reasons which Paderewski thought fantastic, would lose himself in abstruse speculation, which wandered far into the nebu-

lous territories of a sometimes metaphysical philosophy. Moreover, he loved to try and convince his opponent, by reducing his arguments ad absurdum, with his own very complicated deductions from them. Paderewski, whose world was clear and ordered, found such trains of thought incomprehensible. He declined to follow them; in his innermost heart he shrank from them—he feared them.

Paderewski found it impossible, in spite of a certain admiration, to be really enthusiastic for Pilsudski. It was equally impossible, therefore, to succeed in a political arena in which Pilsudski was triumphant. Neither he nor Pilsudski had a clear and defined political programme. But the Prime Minister, from the first, had been obliged to seem favourable to the National Democrats, a party whose star was on the wane. Moreover he had to contend against forces whose existence he scarcely realized, and which he had no power to control. The mind of Poland was unripe to grasp the subtle strength of this musician, whose spirit expressed an ordered, western harmony. The subjection out of which they had just emerged had left the Poles in the midst of a dark, chaotic world, an excited world of romanticism. The blind, dark power of a fanatic could alone prevail in such a country. The Apollonian spirit was as yet unknown to Poland. Pilsudski was the incarnation of the forces in the ascendent.

At the end of 1919 opposition to the Prime Minister became especially powerful. The glamour of his great name was obscured by politics and party intrigue. Almost daily in the Sejm the Prime Minister suffered defeat. And Pilsudski, who, by now had convinced himself that he would never succeed in winning Paderewski, opposed him more and more openly.

Paderewski refused to believe that he would not have

strength enough to win. He tried, in a hundred different ways, to hold his ground. To have resigned would have been a confession of defeat. Every ambition was awake in this man, so accustomed to victory. He must, and would, hold power.

Coolness and insight deserted him, and his grasp of the political situation. He became overwrought and excited. His colleagues in the ministry began, one by one, to desert him. The Prime Minister was considered politically bankrupt.

The speaker of the Sejm announced in Parliament that Paderewski had withdrawn. He was retired from office in his absence. The announcement was made in Parliament before he himself had got to hear of it. His pride and love of country were keenly wounded. Pilsudski stood in the background and calmly watched the Prime Minister's last, panicked struggle for power. He had nothing more to fear.

He went to Paderewski and asked him to form a new government. Paderewski's days were tumultuous; every perspective became confused. He would not see that he had been shipwrecked on the rocks of a half-formed Parliamentary system by a political constellation plainly against him. He accepted Pilsudski's offer, but nobody would support him.

He lived for five days at the mercy of the Chief of State. On December 9th he saw that it was useless. He resigned. His régime was at an end.

Paderewski felt very acutely his defeat as a political force; the wound was deep and painful. He had had such love for this country and for these people.

And he loved them still. It had been a mistake to let his feeling guide him. He had chosen the wrong path.

He still tried in various ways to guide Poland's destinies. But the current was against him; he went into complete retirement. He left Poland and returned to Riond Boisson. His two Steinway grands were still in the corners of the music-room; for years they had stood there untouched. The dark wood caught the light; it gleamed—the keyboards flattered. For a few months Paderewski resisted.

Then he began to practise. His wife's generosity, his own readiness in sacrifice had dissipated the greater part of his fortune. It was necessary to start to earn.

In the winter of 1922–23 he began again to give concerts. Within a few months he was in touch with the distant past before the war. His generation was true to him; the new very willing to be conquered. Once more this great pianist was acknowledged.

And the great citizen. His splendid will to help was honoured. The world forgot that he had proved unequal to the method of helping he had chosen. Universities vied with one another to confer their honorary degrees. Already, in pre-war days, he had been made Doctor of Lemburg and Yale. Oxford, the University of Cracow, Columbia University of New York, South California University, Posen, Glasgow and Cambridge followed suit.

A great citizen was content to be a great virtuoso.

CHAPTER IV

THE DREAM OF THE EAST

I

SLOWLY and painfully the new State began to find stability. Slowly and painfully the Polish Republic strove for recognition in Europe. But internally the land was divided. The smoke of hidden flames was rising all over the east; each milestone shook with the tramp of marching armies.

The German forces turned homewards from the north-east, with the Red Army close at their heels. They took possession of abandoned German territory, and in so doing encroached on Polish and Lithuanian soil. With or without the money of the Entente, White regiments formed in different localities in the east. They fought Bolshevik Russia under Koltschak, Wrangel, Judenitch and Denikin. In the Ukraine Petlura, part adventurer, part statesman, part general, the most notable representative, in any case, of the Ukrainian will to independence, made war on the Bolsheviks and Denikin. East Poland was in a state of unrest, and the frontier between Poland and Russia had not yet been definitely decided. The armies stood face to face. War had not been openly declared, but fierce attacks were constant from both sides.

In December 1919 Tschitscherin, the commissary for foreign affairs, made Poland an offer of peace. But the Chief of State did not believe that the time had come for

settling Poland's eastern frontiers. Poland was not strong enough to determine these for herself, and Pilsudski knew that no faith was to be put in the pacific intentions of the Bolsheviks. Moscow was out to gain time. She hoped to gain it by a temporary peace with Poland. The various White expeditions could still deliver formidable attacks, and the Red Army, only in part reorganized after the losses of the great war, had not enough strength to hope for additional victories on the Polish frontier. The adventurous White Guards must first be crushed; then it would be time for Poland. Moscow still believed in the possibility of world revolution; Poland would, naturally, be the first stage of any expansion into the west. Polish communists, with Dzierzynski, Unszlicht and Felix Kohn at their head, prepared, in Moscow, the political ground for an attack on Poland. Pilsudski was not unaware of this combination, and took the Russian offer for what it was—a diplomatic feint. For the time being a peaceful determination of Poland's eastern frontier was unthinkable. But this question of the eastern frontier had always engrossed Pilsudski. His whole fate had lain in the east; the western world had always been something alien.

He had passed his childhood in the east; the Siberian east had formed his youth; his first battle, his first war, his first leadership had all been on eastern territories. In the far off western world the thoughts of the Chief of State lost their direction.

Now he had become the head and leader of his country. His feet were set upon firm ground, over which his great bow could be drawn. Conspiracy, organization, secrecy, had ceased to be the object of his life. He stood on a height, could look out over vast horizons. The world at

his feet was his possession, its mountains had all been scaled.

Till now every dream had been realized. The Russia of the Czars had ceased to exist; his own country was free. And the country had him to thank for leadership.

But did this mean that a road had been travelled to the end? He did not believe that his destiny could ever be confined. Now was the time to build a castle that should be peopled by his dreams.

The first months of Polish independence had already shown him clearly enough how narrow Poland's destinies would be as long as she remembered past slavery and had found no strength to use above herself. Pilsudski saw with astonishment the pettiness and fear of his people, the meanness of their aspirations. They had their freedom, but they did not know how to use it with the unity and self-sacrifice it demanded. Pilsudski felt the narrow spirit of his countrymen set like a chain about him. If for the present no greatness was to be found at home, it was time to extend frontiers and breathe in a freer air. He saw the east spread out before him, the untamed, will-less east, which seemed to offer room for greater dreams.

The kingdom of the East!

This idea gleamed, many-faceted. It must be realized, its sparkle and glitter shaped and hardened, Napoleon's vision rose before him—of a kingdom that should stretch to the Black Sea. The Near Eastern empire of which Alexander had dreamed. The world had come from the east.

The east of Europe must be reorganized, stamped with the hall-mark of his will. He could see a kingdom in the east, but had no clear notion of how his vision might be realized.

The idea of Polish predominance in Eastern Europe was not a new one. Two essential currents of thought had formed it in Pilsudski's mind—historical and romantic tradition and his personal hatred of Russia. As early as in the fifteenth century the federation of which he dreamed had been the goal of King Jagiello's policy. It was a question, therefore, of reviving the old ambition of a king who, first and foremost, had aspired to a federation of states, Poland, the Ukraine, Lithuania, and White Russia. Culturally and industrially Poland's superiority would set her at the head of this league, would make her the natural leader of a population of 75 millions.

For Pilsudski Poland was great enough to play this predominant part in eastern Europe. It was his will that she should do so and he believed that his will was also Poland's. The distinction between his own desires and his country's had long since ceased to be a real one. Was it not enough that a vision should have risen before his eyes for Poland to behold it also?

He knew, of course, that national objectives could not be visionary. He must set on them some stamp of reality. And he had the art of making his visions seem real. Reasons which appeared to have validity could help him, too, to find ways of carrying through a plan. He would set before his mind the fiction of an all-compelling reason, and use it as a basis for achievement. And in this fashion he could come to terms with his conscience.

For the moment the south-east was his dearest project. There seemed many reasons for using the Ukraine as a basis for operations. The Ukraine must be the first step on the way to a new order in eastern Europe. Pilsudski's thoughts were set on the Ukraine.

Thither he turned for valid proofs and arguments to

convince his own conscience and his countrymen. Russia must be attacked from this point. Poland was to free the Ukraine from Russia and the Bolshevist domination. Thus his country's popularity could be consolidated in the new Ukrainian state. The Ukraine was undeveloped territory. Poles were for the most part the cultural leaders among its inhabitants. Thanks to their mental superiority it ought not to be difficult for them to gain indirect ascendency. Politically the country must come into line against the influence of the mighty Russian neighbour. This, in spite of religious antagonism and difference of language, should bring the Ukraine nearer Poland. His reasons seemed convincing enough. The idea aroused Pilsudski's enthusiasm.

But he found even better reasons. He knew that English sympathies for the adventures of the White Guard were not entirely a matter of sentiment, not even of repugnance towards Bolshevism. Bolshevik conquests in the Ukraine had cut off the Ukrainian corn supply from Europe and stabilized America's grain exports, and in consequence her dominion over Europe. Pilsudski had learnt that England would not have been sorry to see American grain forced out of Europe. The reopening of the Ukrainian corn mart would have been especially welcome to Great Britain. Pilsudski felt this to be possible, and saw in it a chance for Poland. England had no belief in the new Polish state and refused to take Poland seriously. If Poland were to succeed in capturing Ukrainian corn England would be forced to acknowledge her strength and political acumen; abroad, therefore, her position would be immeasurably strengthened.

Could any more realistic policy be conceivable? Pilsudski was intoxicated by the stark "reality" of his vision.

But he forgot to ask himself how possible it would be to realize it. He saw only the Near East with Poland at her head.

The Russian note was scarcely answered, and answered after long procrastination. Pilsudski knew that Russia had not made her proposals in good faith. While the Commissary for Foreign Affairs was making his offer, the Commissary for War was concentrating troops against Poland. The Russians wanted to be ready for attack in the spring. War with Russia seemed unavoidable, and, if war had to be, Pilsudski wanted the country to be prepared.

The continual frontier skirmishes were not inopportune, and Moscow's aggressive intentions also fitted in with his plans. He could proceed, now that war was unavoidable, to realize his eastern projects. Pilsudski decided more readily since till now he had had no chance of showing his gifts as a commander. He believed himself to be a great general, and was eager to prove his military talent in his own eyes and the eyes of the world. To no other branch of activity had he given himself up with so much passion. Politics, conspiracy, enlightenment of the masses had been necessary: he had been glad to devote himself to these since his object was the freeing of Poland; but, freedom apart, they made no special appeal. But he found it pleasant to speak of himself as a soldier, and stressed this side of his nature whenever he could. In the early days of the gunmen he had believed in his strategic gift; the deeds of his irregulars had shown that he knew how a fight should be prepared; in the days of the legions he had been tested as a general of division.

He could never forget that his enemies had called him an amateur. He wanted to give final proof that he had

not been merely a capable soldier, but had managed to teach himself far more than professional officers and generals from military schools.

Though the army was still not thoroughly organized and could not be described as formidable, Pilsudski hoped that it would be strong enough to assist this ambition. Moreover, he had great hopes of Petlura, whose campaign for Ukrainian independence coincided with his own plans. Petlura had promised, in order to win over the Ukraine as an independent state for himself, to organize an army of his own which should bear the chief brunt of the war. Pilsudski did not stop to reflect, but allowed his enthusiasms to master him. He put the fullest trust in the Atman's promises and was certain of success in his war against the Bolshevik Ukraine.

While Petlura was trying to prepare an anti-bolshevist war, anti-bolshevist policy in the Ukraine was directed by Boris Sawinkow, a very old friend of Pilsudski, who in pre-war days had been a notable Russian revolutionary, had become Minister for War under Kerensky, and had now been living for some time in Warsaw. From here he conspired against the Bolsheviks with Pilsudski's secret assistance and support.

The Soviets knew that Poland was prolonging negotiations and would seek a military decision. But Russia, too, had armed against the Poles.

The area on which a war between Russia and Poland could be fought out was necessarily somewhat restricted. Successful operations could only be managed in two places—in north-east Poland, on White Russian and Lithuanian soil, or south-east on Ukrainian territory. The great strip of land which divides them comprises the endless swamps of Polesia. Even now, with a military front

A QUIET HOUR

between the countries extending over more than a thousand kilometres, these two territories were the only feasible battle ground. Pilsudski, who was not merely Chief of State and by the vote of the army First Field Marshal of Poland, but also Commander-in-Chief, and in the event of war First War Lord, decided to fight in the south-east, in the Ukraine. Certain strategic arguments against this were subordinated to his political idea.

He listened willingly to Secret Intelligence reports bringing news that the Bolsheviks would be likely to concentrate to the south. It would need a crushing military defeat to force the Russians to evacuate the Ukraine and the strips of territory to the north of it. Though Pilsudski learnt in the end that the Bolsheviks did not think of beginning operations in the south, but would invade the territories to the north, his decision to attack in the south remained unshaken. He wanted to anticipate the enemy, and by occupying the south create a solid basis of operations for a future northern attack. By a quick offensive in the Ukraine he hoped to master the situation. He was deaf to all purely strategic considerations.

Pilsudski led in person the army which was to march to the conquest of the Ukraine. Among Poles the war aroused no special enthusiasms. The opposition felt, what most clear-sighted people were feeling, that this was a private war of the Chief of State. His troops were not well armed; they had not yet fully recovered from a very severe winter on the long Russian frontier. But the Russians were no better off. Their forces had been massed to the north; a few Red troops were guarding the southern lines. Many regiments began to desert the Ukraine before the light, quickly moving and far stronger Polish army could even come within sight of them.

The offensive, begun on April 25th, led to Polish occupation of nearly the whole Ukraine as far as the right bank of the Dnieper. Its climax, on the 7th of May, was the surrender of the capital, Kiev, which fell before the Poles without a blow. But during their whole advance Pilsudski's troops had met only isolated regiments. The Russians had managed to avoid the major conflict. They had evacuated the country without having had to sacrifice troops, without having suffered a defeat.

At first Pilsudski allowed himself to believe in a victory. He beheld his eastern vision being realized. He saw Wolhynia, Podolia and the Ukraine occupied by Polish troops who, in a fortnight, had managed to conquer half a kingdom. His vision had begun to come to life.

On May the 18th he returned to Warsaw from the front. The country was quite willing to be deluded. It was pleasant to hang out decorations and drape Polish flags over balconies, more especially in the lovely spring weather. The destinies of the Chief of State looked greater than the destinies of his country; his eagles seemed to soar to victories, though they were not the eagles of Poland.

On the afternoon of May 18th Pilsudski, as first Polish Marshal, ascended the steps of the Cathedral of St. Alexander. Priests received him to the sound of loud peals with deep bows and festive Te Deum. Ordnance welcomed him as he drove back through the decorated streets to the Belvedere. The Sejm, that evening, met in special conclave. Its leader greeted the Chief of State with the words —"Since the days of Chocim the Polish people has seen no such triumph in arms. The victorious march on Kiev has made the nation conscious of her strength, has brought firm belief in a free future. To-day the whole world has seen and known that Poland is no longer helpless."

The acoustics in the Chamber were defective; these words rang hollow as though spoken through a funnel. The First War Lord faced the assembled representatives of the people with the courage and dignity of a conqueror. It needed no special effort to still the voice of his conscience.

2

Beyond Rinsk and Vilna, at the very hour when the first Field Marshal of Poland was ascending the steps of the Church of St. Alexander, an ex-lieutenant of the Czar's bodyguard, the twenty-eight year old Mikhail Tukhatchewsky, general-in-chief of the Red Army, began his advance in the north-east.

Pilsudski, in spite of the news of this offensive, decided to hold fast to the south. He contented himself with a short counter-attack, but never believed it to be necessary to press on and abandon southern conquests to the strategic necessities of the north.

He did not even attempt a decoy. Tukhatchewsky, in the south, had left a force of just sufficient number to divide Polish forces and deflect their full strength from his front. Pilsudski was deceived by this strategy: he even transferred more troops to the south to deal a decisive blow at the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile, in the north, the Russian advance continued. Here Tukhatchewsky could dispose of a force of 21 infantry divisions and two divisions of cavalry; in all 220,000 men. The Poles opposed a strength of 12 divisions or about 110,000. Pilsudski kept ten divisions in the south, which the northern army had to relinquish. But even in the south the uncertain strategy of the Polish command created a somewhat critical position. The Russians had sent four cavalry divisions under

Budjenny to attack. The word "Budjenny" soon became a demoralizing sound in the ears of Polish regiments. On June 5th Budjenny appeared at the rear of the Polish army. He broke their line and rode down everything in his way. His name became a magic formula which filled the Polish troops with boundless terror. The southern line began to crumble, the army to abandon the Ukraine. On June 13th Kiev was evacuated.

The retreat became a rout. Terrifying rumours spread through the Polish ranks. Bolshevism and its army were a bogey from which there seemed no escape. The Bolsheviks did their best to confirm these rumours. For preference they used half-savage troops, who increased the terror which the name "Red Army" inspired. Regiments composed in the main of adventurers, flat-featured Mongols and criminals, were transferred to fight in the Ukraine. In Zytomierz, in a Polish hospital, all the nurses and wounded were slaughtered. Courage in the Polish army dwindled from day to day. Complete disintegration had set in. The Russians did not feel they were fighting Poland. Among the Kremlin's real objectives Poland was a secondary matter. It was necessary to conquer Poland in order to secure the triumph of Bolshevism in central, and, later, in all Europe. The moment seemed propitious to the Russians. If Bolshevism could once be established in the west of Russia, that is to say in Poland, it ought not to be difficult to spread it further through the west. The internal situation in Germany seemed favourable to Russian plans, but there must be no dividing country between the Russians and the Germans. Once Poland had become entirely Bolshevik, her nearest neighbours—Austria, who was struggling for her life, Hungary, Esthonia and Latvia—would follow suit. Communist propaganda in France and

Italy had begun to make considerable progress. The economic chaos in central Europe, with its constant strikes, its conflicts between workers and police, its universal unrest, would make it much easier to consolidate Bolshevism. But to begin with, Poland, the most important central European country in the near east, would have to be conquered. When, in July, the French socialist Frossard, on a visit to Moscow, asked Lenin—"Don't you think that your prestige would increase in the eyes of the world if now, instead of sending your armies abroad, you were to offer peace to your enemies?" the leader of Russia answered: "In theory you may be right, but not in practice. I must join in the march on Warsaw. We shall go to Warsaw and make Poland a Soviet republic."

Pilsudski awoke. A dream had been dispelled.

There was neither time nor room for the dreams of individuals. A single destiny must be shattered once it tried to escape from its vocation, allowing itself to be guided, not by the voice of the world, the voice of reality, but by the despotic promptings of desire.

Pilsudski shuddered. Fear seized him. He saw the Polish corpses which lay heaped on the Ukrainian earth. His restlessness increased with every hour. Each day brought fresh announcement of disaster. He sank into purposeless broodings which led him further and further into the hopelessness of the whole situation. Till this moment he had always found it possible to collect his forces and impose his will on a mass. Now he had lost control both of his own and of others' strength.

Events had grown beyond him into proportions he was unable to control, with which neither his faith nor will knew how to cope. It was no longer a case of individual

enemies or friends—people he would have known how to influence—not even of the single fate of Poland. These forces towered beyond sheer Polish destinies.

Bolshevism was not the only enemy. Pilsudski's ambitions in the east were resented in many places abroad. All over the world there was opposition. Foreign powers began to interfere in matters in which, till now, Pilsudski had been sole master. Foreign diplomats began to take a share in Polish destinies; foreign governments and ministers met at conferences in which Poland's future was apprised and decided.

Pilsudski had no control over any of them; he felt that his leadership was slipping from him. Individual power throughout the world was to be crushed by a collective foreign will. He strove within himself to find means for avoiding catastrophe; he found nothing but obscurity and emptiness—a darkness in which there was no light.

Could fate take her revenges? Was this fate's answer to the whole Ukrainian campaign? Not only his faith and will were shattered, the whole world-constellation prevented the unfolding of his genius. He could only work as an individual; the power which had always made a victor of him deserted him if he tried to work with others.

The Polish war had become an opportunity for Europe. Everyone condemned and yet took part in it. Pilsudski felt the opposition which had grown all over the world against him. The war in the Ukraine set the stigma of Imperialism on Poland; this stigma had been his work. It was almost as though he could feel the hostile strength of millions of English and American, German, French and Italian workers. In France the socialists published a manifesto with the following—"Pas un homme, pas un sou, pas un obus pour la Pologne réactionnaire"—and in England the Labour

Party proclaimed, "The workers of Great Britain will refuse their support to any country which behaves as Poland has behaved." The foreign world, from which till now he had stood aloof, was forcing its collective strength upon him. The army lacked equipment and munitions; the country itself had, as yet, no means of re-inforcement, Pilsudski was forced to look abroad.

A consignment of aeroplanes from Italy could not be delivered since Italian mechanics would not work on them. A steamer from Salonika laden with French munitions put into Dantzig and was refused permission to unload. The British Chief Commissioner, Sir Reginald Tower, withheld his sanction, and German dock-workers declined to help the enemies of the Bolsheviks. Dock-workers in Cherbourg refused to handle other aeroplanes sent by the French Government, which were left to rust in the harbour. The European powers were certainly afraid of Bolshevism, but they also considered it unwise to oppose the will of their working people. This was 1920, and the workers saw in Bolshevism the salvation of their class and the realization of their dreams of equality.

But on July the 6th the Polish Premier, Grabski, went to Spa, where the Entente Conference was sitting, Lloyd-George was its moving spirit. Lloyd-George feared the English workers, believed that he could compromise with Russia, and had no special love for Poland. Instead of help, a proposal was submitted to Grabski, the rigorous conditions of which he saw himself obliged to accept. Poland was to approach Russia with a formal request for peace. As Polish defeats became more crushing and the Russians advanced further into Poland, the diplomats for both sides exchanged notes. But neither Poles nor Russians took them seriously. Both hoped in the end to dictate terms after a

decisive victory in the field. A mission from the Polish premier did not result in more than fresh pourparlers. The Entente countries also promised to appoint quite valueless commissions.

The whole Ukraine had had to be evacuated; half East Galicia was in Russian hands. The Northern army threatened to disintegrate. Moreover, on the 14th of July, the Russians seized Pilsudski's native town, his beloved Vilna, which for a year had belonged to Poland.

Pilsudski saw only disaster. He felt that belief and strength had both deserted him. He would sit for hours over maps, stare down at them, and never seize a thought.

Their leader's depression spread among the people. Despair in the High Command was no secret to the generals on the Staff. It began to infect them also. Then it reached the officers, and from officers the whole army. Panic spread through the country. Extraneous circumstances only helped to intensify it all. Cholera and spotted typhus had broken out at the front. The break-up of the Commander-in-Chief seemed to have let loose a swarm of evil spirits.

Poland began to tremble. The great mass of her citizens had taken small part in the Ukrainian campaign. In cafés it had been a favourite and constant topic, but few had experienced its actual victories and defeats. This had never been a national war: there was more important work near at hand. The national anthem had been sung, windows had been draped with Polish flags, people had joined processions with a band. But all these things could be done on other unimportant occasions. This was a war which had led the Chief of State and his army into some vague territory in the Ukraine.

But now the danger was approaching. People began to

lose their heads. Bolshevism no longer meant an enemy army, a political system, a hostile country, it had become a terrifying idea,—a stark horror, which on sleepless nights roused pictures of murder, rape and devastation. Every symptom of war-neurosis came to life again. The leader had lost faith in himself; he had shaken the confidence of the army. And the country had ceased to believe in him.

Never before had Pilsudski appeared so bereft of will. The game was up. He announced his willingness to entrust the defence of Poland to other hands. He, who in military matters had never had to submit to any order, declared himself willing to share his power. A "Council of National Defence" was elected. The speaker of the Sejm was a member of it, with the Chief of State, the Prime Minister, and several officers and deputies. Pilsudski, though still in command, had become only one among many. This new council had the control of future operations.

In July everything seemed lost. It was no longer a question of Bolshevism or no Bolshevism. It was no longer a question of foreign aid, or an encroachment of foreign powers, who had decided that Poland had acted wrongly, and had followed her own imperialistic longings. Apart from two Commissions, an English one under Lord D'Abernon and General Wilson, and a French Commission with Jusserand and General Weygand, the powers had not felt it incumbent on them to send any further assistance. They had lost faith in Poland. Poland was given up. The west took no more interest in the war. The Poles were thrown back on their own resources; they must go their way to the end. And that way might lead to death or to survival.

The whole situation had changed. Isolated and wretched, the country lay like an island surrounded by its lines of

battle. Pilsudski began to feel that the position had ceased to be the same as it had been a few weeks previously. He opened his eyes, the eyes which despair had nearly blinded, and contemplated the whole new situation. He had ceased to be accountable to foreigners. Now no stranger could control him. No foreign power would watch his movements. Poland depended on him alone, and Poland was struggling for life. This new dispensation gave him strength. His pulse beat faster.

Victory?—death? The end, at least, was upon him. Everything seemed to point to a decision. The world of foreigners had vanished. Pilsudski was, once more, the central figure.

There was room again for a leader. One man again must summon up his whole remaining strength, every force that still might sleep within him.

He had never noticed amidst universal panic and depression that, even on the fronts, the last few weeks had brought a change. Automatically the retreat had shortened the whole line, so that various sectors contained more troops than before. And on the other hand, Tukhatchewsky's colossal advance spelt his weakness on many of his fronts. He had left garrisons behind him in various key positions in invaded territory, but his lines of communication had still to be laid or given adequate military protection. The advance, moreover, had thinned out the Russian lines more and more, and proportionately weakened each separate attacking formation. But the Russians were so certain of their victory, the absolute success of this extraordinary invasion had so intoxicated them, that Tukhatchewsky, himself, was unaware that the balance had shifted and weakened his own position.

Pilsudski's faith came back. He could see things as they

really were, and not as his illusions had distorted them. Approaching chaos must be prevented, this disordered retreat be stemmed.

And the country began to pull herself together. The war had taken on another aspect, had become reality and no longer an item of news. Panic had spread like wildfire when the danger was a hundred miles off. But now within a very short time Warsaw herself might have fallen. This danger, now, was real, not a matter for exaggerated words. Each must defend his land, his skin, his property, his house, the things which we can feel in every nerve. Every thought and breath was conscious of this peril. Poles remembered their heroic tradition, the warrior blood in their veins. This strain of heroism had for centuries brought futility and sorrow on the nation, it might also become her strength. They could not let themselves be slaughtered like a troop of dumb cowards, by foreign hordes. The people had come to their senses, had begun to strain every nerve. They felt new strength within them; a wave of confidence swept the country. Where, a few days previously, fear and lack of direction had prevailed, a will to victory grew apparent. Some way must be found of snatching from the Bolshevik clutches this new-won freedom and independence—some way must be found—a plan; a plan!

Till now the people had felt that the high command was fumbling in the dark; without direction, incapable of any strategic decision. Lack of faith had resulted in lack of strategy. But now a plan must be worked out. Poland began to seethe with excitement. Peasants forgot even the harvest, and turned to pray to the Madonna.—"Protect us; give us a sign!" Sceptics and unbelievers would cross themselves when nobody was near. All with

equal fervour implored the Mother of God and the Divine Child on her knee.

A will to release, the belief in a successful issue, spread far and wide among the people, down the ranks of the army, through officers and generals to the command. It infected the Commander-in-Chief. The nation was welded into one common effort for deliverance.

Pilsudski locked himself into his room in the Belvedere. For hours he paced it. He turned to the unfolded maps. He had discussed every contingency with his staff, had assimilated all their science. By the time he rested it was night. He took up a pack of cards and began to lay out a patience. Patience, when his brain had been working at fever heat, was the surest way to distraction and rest. While, to the apparent exclusion of all else, the elaborate combinations of the game were occupying the centre of his mind, while his thoughts seemed to have wandered away into regions where there was neither Russia, war nor strategy, it was as though a door within him had been pushed open. He could pass on into an inner world, a world not subject to his brain, in which he could perceive events in new and clearer light.

It was as though he were far from himself, far from these cards and from this room, from his thoughts and the intricate patience which occupied him, in a void where the light was more transparent. Gradually the void became thronged with familiar shapes. But their outer husk had fallen from him, the reality of these forms and faces was revealed. Within himself all shapes could become more comprehensible. They were themselves, without the masks that had been imposed on them by convention and habit. Thoughts moved through another atmosphere, autono-

mous and detached—fused into such a unity with emotion that the dividing line between them had melted.

Pilsudski at such moments felt a peace, which, except in these hours when he played patience, he very seldom experienced—a glowing quiet, profound and full of courage which could penetrate his innermost core. It was as though he were released from himself, as though in his place there sat another man, over cards, among the intricacies of a game. And yet, between himself and this other, there remained a secret bond.

And the other, whom he had been so recently, seemed strange and unreal at such times—a body, like the rest which did and thought; felt this or that. These things were his image, not himself; the man who had escaped both cards and game, who had dived into the clear depths of reality, was the real Josef Pilsudski.

But, once he had seen clearly into things which surface meditation and brooding had not revealed to him, he would break off his patience and sweep the cards aside. His brain would have been rested by the trivial concentration of the game, and he could think out the practical consequences of what he had perceived while he was playing it.

When this game of patience was over Pilsudski believed that he had discovered the right strategy. He began to work things out with some of his staff.

His idea was to withdraw his forces without further defence or attack, far enough to make a wide gap between his troops and the enemy. The Russians must be made to push on for a considerable time into the void. This would give the regiment a chance to recuperate, reorganize and reform their front. And the army must have the possibility of creating its own line of defence, not

fighting on a line imposed by the enemy. His retreat would try to draw the Russians off to the north-west as far as possible. Their rear and their southern flank would be exposed. The Polish army, re-grouped and fresh for battle, was to fall on them from the south-east, and from there their coup de grâce might be delivered. Pilsudski himself, though he commanded the united forces, should lead this army from the south.

General Weygand had conceived a similar plan. He wanted the Poles to retreat as far as possible—even sacrifice Warsaw if necessary—for a better re-formation of the troops. But in this Pilsudski opposed him. To have sacrificed the capital would have killed the new optimism of the nation. The loss of Warsaw might have robbed him of his best weapons, the weapons on which he counted for victory—the enthusiasm, will and faith of his people. No foreigners could understand the value of this spiritual arm which the incalculable Polish spirit would have to use.

He adopted various strategic and technical improvements suggested by the French general. Weygand did not oppose him; he could appreciate Pilsudski's psychological reasoning and had only considered himself an adviser.

Now that he had managed to clarify his thought and find direction, the road itself became smoother. As his chief of staff Pilsudski appointed General Rozwadowski, who worked with a cool, light-hearted optimism, which infected all his brother officers. General Josef Haller organized the enlistment of volunteers. The mass of the people, who till now had taken no active share in the war, began to flock to the colours. Universities and lycées were closed down; students and pupils crowded to enlist in Haller's volunteer regiments. The youth of the country

was in arms. Young men, full of confidence and fresh courage, were drafted into existing regiments. They infused them with a tradition that had been lost, the tradition of sacrifice for the country which the educated classes in particular had preserved intact.

This new will and belief soon spread among the peasants and professional soldiers, who had become war-worn and indifferent, and who in the last two months had turned the army into a demoralized mass without a purpose. Rich business men, aristocrats and gentry, formed companies which they armed at their own expense, from among their servants, peasants and dependents, and these went to swell the army. And regular mobilization made giant strides within a few weeks. Each day, each hour, brought new achievement, some strengthening of the country's morale.

While in western Europe, which had been through all the horrors of war, the days of soldiering had ended, Poland was roused to her own 1914. War-fever raged in the land. "We'll show the enemy what's what." The same slogans, the same brass bands, which a few years before had roused the west. The same glorious and vain enthusiasms.

The country turned to war as though it had been nothing more terrible than the newest page in the emblazoned chronicles of her history. Every bellicose folly became general.

But now for the first time the soul of a people could transcend itself, could sacrifice its daily ease for the achievement of a common end. The passion and faith of a race found its expression in this war. This was no such war of poison gas, of mechanisms, of sheer material power, as had just been concluded in the west. It was waged with

weapons which the Powers had discarded for many years; the deeds of individuals still counted. A war which satisfied the vain and childlike instinct of the Poles. Pilsudski could seize every chance afforded by such a war and such a people. He would have been at a loss with such material amid the exact professionalism of the west. When his country had reached a turning-point, his instinct to form was specially strong.

Weygand and the French officers took over some portion of the technical work. They stood for the west, and did all that the west could do. They could apply more up-to-date methods to formations still too undeveloped to discover such methods for themselves. But Poland had nothing further to receive or hope from the west.

In Hythe, on August 9th, Lloyd-George had explained to Millerand that "nothing could be done to save Poland." Next day, in the House of Commons, he announced that Poland must not count on receiving any British help, and advised her to accept Russian terms. Kameneff, on the previous day, had confided these terms to Lloyd-George. They included the disarming of Poland and the setting up in every Polish city of Soldiers' and Workers' Councils. The sympathies of the British premier were tinged with red. And it was natural enough, as things stood, that he should be more inclined to make concessions to representatives of the Great Republic of Soviets than to deputies from Poland, which appeared to him a nest of adventurers on which he had scarcely more information than could be gleaned at the very last moment from a whispered consultation with his secretaries.

But Pilsudski knew the wave that bore him on. Before his eyes was the clear reality of a plan. He believed in victory.

In the first days of August the Chief of State left Warsaw for the front, and visited the various sectors. Everywhere he met confidence and enthusiasm. The change was incredible. He shuddered at the memory of the front as it had been a few months previously. But in many respects, even now, the condition of the army was lamentable. Boots were defective; thousands of soldiers had been insufficiently trained and could scarcely handle a rifle. Many of them had joined up within the previous days; there had scarcely been time to provide the most elementary training. When the First Field Marshal asked some soldiers of a new division whether they could shoot they answered with broad, peasant grins that till yesterday they had never touched a gun. Some soldiers shot at random into the woods. Questioned as to their reason for this curious form of rifle practice, they answered that they had been told that somewhere in the wood there was an enemy, so they thought they had better shoot at him.

On August 13th Pilsudski arrived in Pulawy, where final preparations had begun to be made for the attack. Even from his staff his plan had been kept a secret. Commanders of the various sections had their orders, but the whole plan was known to nobody. On the first night in Pulawy the general announced it to his staff. He liked the number thirteen. Whenever he could he would make important decisions on this date. Two days later, in the evening, he summoned Colonel Stachiewicz and General Skierski, who had been his right-hand men through all the worst days of defeat. On the night before decisive action Pilsudski felt that the presence of two specially trusted brother officers would help him to keep his courage high. Skierski, till the end of the war, had held high rank in the Russian army; he had been trained in the Russian Academy

of War, and Pilsudski had faith in his talents as an officer. This little man, with his bald head and childlike eyes, was especially attached to his chief. In critical days this affection could inspire and console him as effectively as his simple Christianity. Stachiewicz was much younger. He was an ex-officer of the legions, had enlisted out of affection for Pilsudski and devotion to his tradition of heroism. His sensitive spirit felt this war, not only as a turning-point in history, but as a personal fate, a source of the intensest anxiety. He had had a considerable share in working out the plan of attack, but he would never have admitted that he and not the Field Marshal deserved even the smallest credit for it. He had decided that if it were to fail he must take the greatest share of the blame; no one, if it succeeded, should know that he had even had a hand in it. On the failure of the disastrous Ukrainian campaign, he, with several other staff officers, had shielded their chief by letting it appear that they were to blame. He belonged to the very best type of early legion officer, of those who were ready to die for an idea and who all were devoted to their "commander."

It was Pilsudski's wish, on the evening before the decisive day, to be surrounded by such men as these. He believed that if he chose the right companions their influence would turn events as he desired. The elder officer gave him a feeling of professional confidence and security, the younger of the legions' faith and enthusiasm. Success must come if the attack could be begun in such an atmosphere.

But he had to make an excuse for this meeting. He felt all the gravity of the hour. He stressed again the fact that at four next morning the first attack was to be delivered, that within the next forty-eight hours Poland would have

met her fate. The solemnity of his voice expressed the gravity of the moment. The Marshal was very stern; he spoke only the most essential words. "We win or go under. We're playing a desperate game. It must succeed." His voice enthralled, his eyes lit up. Dziadek! The young colonel and Skierski the veteran would willingly have been hacked to bits for him.

On August 13th the Red Army which, meanwhile, had followed the Poles to Warsaw, delivered a fierce attack to the north of the capital, which, now, they intended to invest. They advanced to within six miles of Praga, the Warsaw suburb on the right bank of the Vistula. Day and night the guns could be heard in Warsaw streets. Wounded were transported direct from the front in street cars. Diplomatic and consular representatives left the town, and retired for safety to Posen, a couple of hundred miles to the west. During the previous weeks they had met twice a day at the house of the Papal Nuncio, Achille Ratti, to discuss the situation and decide the possibility of flight. All except the Nuncio and the Italian ambassador left Warsaw.

On the 14th the Russian attack was concentrated on the territory between Warsaw and East Prussia, along the river Ukra, north of the capital. On the following day the commander of the northern front managed to hold back the Prussians and repulse them. On the 16th, from the south, Pilsudski began an offensive on the unprotected rear of the Russian army. The blow was unexpected. The Bolshevik line began to waver; the Russian regiments drew back. They had not reckoned with the strong Polish counter-attack from the north, nor with Pilsudski's sudden onslaught. This was the first occasion in months on which the main strengths of both armies stood face to

face. In the advance of the last weeks, which had covered many miles, the Russians had pushed forward into the void, encountering little serious opposition. Not until the last few days had their main forces met in bloody conflict, and now it became apparent that Tukhatchewsky's army was even more untrained than the Poles. The Russians retreated pell-mell; their flight was without will to resist; they never even stopped to face the enemy. In the north, the south, the east, their forces turned back in disorder.

Their defeat had struck them like lightning from a clear sky. The Russians had been quite sure that they would win, were convinced that they would enter Warsaw. Along the Russian front, on the 13th, a rumour had spread that Warsaw was already taken. Belief in this had been general; it was not confined to the Russians; in foreign countries, too, it seemed inevitable. On the 15th several Berlin newspapers had announced that the Bolsheviks were in Warsaw.

Polish triumphs did not end on the northern front. Shortly after the victories of August 13th–16th, the Bolsheviks were beaten in the south. Polish cavalry regiments in the line succeeded completely in routing the dreaded cavalry of Budjenny. Never before in the history of European warfare, had there been such a cavalry engagement. At last the name Budjenny had ceased to spread terror among Poles.

The Russians had been defeated on all fronts. Poland had triumphed. The miracle had been vouchsafed.

The country drew a breath of astonishment, stifled at first, then deep and free. She had won the war! Three

cheers, Pilsudski! He had saved his country. Three cheers, Weygand! and three cheers more for the army.

The churches were crowded to overflowing. Thanks to Mary, Holy Mother of God! These last and desperate preparations, the return from despair to relief in victory—everything had been accomplished in so short a time that it seemed as inexplicable as a miracle. The people believed in this miracle and gave their victory a name—"The miracle of the Vistula."

And the Bolshevik danger had been averted, not only from Poland, but from Europe. Men who could see the whole position had seized the significance of what happened. Lord D'Abernon, who had been present and watched the "miracle" with his eyes, insisted, again and again, in later years that the Polish victory had saved at least Central Europe from the Bolsheviks. "Had Warsaw fallen, Bolshevism would have extended to Dantzig and Czecho-Slovakia, to the Ruhr, and to a great part of Saxony."

And Winston Churchill, the British Minister for War and the one English politician who had grasped the whole position with unusual understanding and insight, wrote, almost a decade later, of Poland's war against the Russians:

"But meanwhile there had come a transformation—sudden, mysterious and decisive. It produced the same sort of impression upon the mind as had the Battle of the Marne almost exactly six years before. . . . Warsaw, like Paris, is saved, The ponderous balances have adjusted themselves to a new decision; Poland, like France, is not to perish, but to live. Europe, her liberties and her glory, are not to succumb to Kaiserism or Communism. . . . The spirit of Poland, which had not been quenched

through generations of oppression, blazed into one last supreme effort for national existence. . . . The blatant, feeble Terror, which had marched so confidently to carry world Revolution into the West, recoiled with the utmost precipitation across the Polish frontier."

For the first time, now, Pilsudski had achieved far more than for his country. The collective will of his people had never before been bent in such an effort. Poland had been, for centuries, cut off from any opportunity of great historical action. Now she had become a sword for the west to use in her war on the Bolshevik east. Yet though the west had trembled, her frontiers did not touch the Russian border. The west had come into no contact with the true realities of Bolshevism. Poland was the only land which could oppose the Bolshevik east with all her strength. Open battle was possible, not merely the secret game played with a thousand threads of intrigue which western states were not ill-pleased to play. The forces of the east, for which the west as yet had little room, must be stemmed. In Pilsudski was concentrated the rising passion of his land. His great hour had come upon him, an hour in which his destiny was that of the whole western world. For this one hour he ceased to be a Polish hero and achieved European significance. Europe in him fulfilled her destinies.

On September 21st the Russian and Polish delegates met in conference. On October 11th in Riga peace was signed between the two countries.

3

But in spite of his victory over Tukhatchewsky, Pilsudski did not feel completely happy. He had failed to

satisfy himself. His dreams of a federation of Eastern states in connection with White Russia and the Ukraine had been shattered by the Peace of Riga. Poland's eastern frontiers had been determined without regard to his hopes in the east. The Peace of Riga had not only disregarded his eastern aspirations; it had given foreigners the legal right to territory which had belonged to Poland before the partition of 1772. The country between Minsk and Witebsk, Luck and Kiev had now ceased definitely to be Polish. Pilsudski had had to stand by and see his fondest hopes destroyed.

Admirers felt that he stood at the summit of his career. He had saved his country and freed Europe, had earned the thanks and praises of the world. He had achieved no less than Jan Sobieski, the Polish king who, two hundred and fifty years before, had rescued Vienna and the Empire of the Hapsburgs from the Turks. These admirers, uncritical and devoted, saw in Pilsudski a genius far greater than the national hero Kosciuszko, a giant who had united in himself the gifts of a Garibaldi and a Cavour, and whom they could only compare with Napoleon. He had reached the summit of an unexampled destiny. To serve him was a glorious thing: it was glorious to have believed in him from the first.

But the Marshal was too given to brooding to find much inner satisfaction. His pride was unappeased. Again and again he would ask himself, if the achievement had been solely his? He heard the voices of his enemies, the voice of the opposition—of the National Democrats, who grudged him his laurels and acclaimed in General Weygand the real hero. Has the last most important part of his victory really been the work of another man—a foreigner?

So he alone had not achieved this victory! First there had been the council of defence; then came his own staff, and finally this French general.

Pilsudski cursed his want of resolution during the critical days of despair. His staff wrote, stating unmistakably that the victory had been his work. The French general, who was not only a brilliant soldier but also a very gallant gentleman, confirmed, declaring that he himself had achieved no victory, and that operations had been directed "by Polish generals in accordance with a Polish plan of attack." But Pilsudski knew that the world would give the French general the greatest credit. His torturingly introspective and analytical mind went back again and again over details of Weygand's co-operation and the collective action of the nation.

The idea of an eastern federation which should include the Ukraine and White Russia, belonged, no doubt, to the past. But his eyes turned to Vilna: here federation might be possible, with Vilna incorporated in Poland as the capital of a Lithuanian state, which, formed on King Jagiello's plan, could be in closest touch with the Poles. This scheme formed one of his dearest wishes. He had stressed this point again and again. "For me the Vilna question had always been of the first importance. It occupied me more than any other. My heart was in it most of all."

Pilsudski saw in Vilna and along with Vilna, Lithuania, his real home. He had always felt a slight contempt for Poland: Vilna was also Poland, but a better Poland, a Lithuanian Poland. And Lithuanians were for him the salt of the Polish earth; the pure Polish strain came second. How often had he not turned to an audience, even to the members of the Sejm, with the words "You Poles."

He was no Pole! Or rather he was a Pole from Lithuania. Had not Napoleon come from Corsica to conquer France and lead her on to victory? It always pleased him to remember that Napoleon had not been a Frenchman, that enemies had made fun of his French accent. On days when this thought was uppermost his Lithuanian accent was pronounced.

His resolve was firm. His country must thank him for some gift which he and only he had bestowed. And this gift must be Vilna. Pilsudski's longing for Vilna was not unshared by his countrymen. It found echoes all over Poland, and was not merely a Polish wish, but the wish of Vilna's inhabitants. No political or strategic pretensions of the new Lithuanian state had very much interest for Pilsudski. Nor were his ambitions quite fantastic; general opinion shared and strengthened them. And the wish of Vilna's inhabitants for incorporation with Poland inspired him with a special faith.

The Germans who had occupied Vilna during the war vacated it at the beginning of 1919, and left it a prey to the Bolsheviks. A few months later Pilsudski had invested the town. He spoke, in a manifesto, of a Lithuanian-Polish Federation. The idea was not received with enthusiasm, since the inhabitants of Vilna wanted absolute incorporation with Poland. The Lithuanian party, on the other hand, regarded the idea as fantastic, and did not believe it to be feasible. The Bolshevik invasion forced the Poles to abandon Vilna. The Bolsheviks did not leave the town to the Lithuanians till Polish arms had forced them to a retreat.

Pilsudski decided that Vilna, the town of his school-days, the chief town in a countryside whose associations were very dear to him, must become a Polish possession.

International agreements prevented him from seizing the town. At the Spa Conference the Polish premier had had to promise that his country would renounce all aspirations to Vilna. Since nothing legal or open could be done in the matter, Pilsudski decided on other methods, methods which might be less law-abiding, but which promised to be more successful. He was entirely devoid of respect for bourgeois morality. He believed laws made for mediocrity to have no application to himself. His country was the only law by which he was eternally bound and to which he was willing to sacrifice everything. He felt justified in the national interest in setting aside even measures which he and his government had passed. He believed he had a right to his own ethic. But he was Chief of State and had international relationships to consider.

Vilna, therefore, must be taken by illegal methods. Pilsudski called a selected council of generals to Lida and announced that Vilna must be invested. Since the government had promised to renounce it he could give no official order to take the town. The army must bear full responsibility. General Zeligowski must take it and be personally responsible for his action.

From the first he had his eye on Zeligowski. Zeligowski had served in the Russian army, and, like himself, came of Polish-Lithuanian noble stock. Vilna, far rather than Poland, was his home. To see Vilna Polish had always been his dearest wish. Pilsudski knew that none of the Polish generals could understand his own feeling for Vilna—his longing to unite with Poland the ancient seat of Lithuanian princes—so readily as Zeligowski. Zeligowski's memories of childhood were the same. As a young man he had had the same traditions. No one could be more in sympathy, or better fitted for such work.

Yet Zeligowski hesitated. He was a soldier to the marrow of his bones. Politics meant nothing to him; he loved fighting for fighting's sake—was a swashbuckler out of another century. After the Revolution he had headed a Polish division which had been serving in the Russian army, and fought his way back into Poland with it. He had scoured Russia from end to end in one long, adventurous epic, had fought White Guards and anarchists, Bolsheviks and Germans, regulars and marauding bands, sailors and workmen. He would smash whoever seemed suspicious or barred his way. He had been taken prisoner many times and made his escape in the night. If his flight were impeded, he would fight through with sabre and revolver. He was tall and gruff; had a bearded Russian face, and cared nothing at all for books or conventions. The world for him was a place either of good men to drink with, or of the others into whose bodies he emptied lead.

His men were ready to go through fire for him. They knew that beneath this roughness real warmth—even tenderness—lay hidden. They loved the man in him as much as the soldier. A strong and primitive sense of justice, a burning desire to do his duty expressed the simplicity of his nature. Like so many other Polish-Russian officers, he loved his Poland like a child. He was devoted to Pilsudski, who had recalled the Polish nation into being, though at times this uncanny hero rather frightened him.

He did not fully grasp the political reasons at the back of his commander's mind. Foreign politics, alliances and entanglements had no interest for him. He saw that he was being asked to do a thing for which the command would not be responsible. Till now this had never happened. What was the Chief there for? He had nothing to

say against taking Vilna. He was perfectly willing to seize, not only Vilna, but Kowno itself, the seat of Lithuanian government—and, if necessary, all Lithuania. If war should be declared to-morrow, nothing would please him better than active service. Otherwise one became so slack.

But he was no Chief of State, no commander of the army, no marshal. He must be answerable to somebody. He was a plain soldier, who could scarcely take responsibility to any authority higher than his superior officer. He was used to that. He had the greatest respect for treaties and written obligations. His direct military mind fought shy of any action which appeared in the least dishonourable. Certainly he would take Vilna, provided his Chief would give him a written order, stating that he must override the government and enter Vilna unofficially. In that case there would be no hesitation; he would push forward to Vilna at once. But he could not take full responsibility, either to himself or to the world.

Pilsudski was in despair. He had hoped that Zeligowski would endorse his scheme with enthusiasm. He talked on almost without a break for something like twenty-four hours, trying to win over this blunt officer. He begged, conjured, appealed to Zeligowski's love of country, his honour as a soldier—strove to explain. All to no purpose. In the end he lost his temper and shouted with rage—"I wanted to make you a D'Annunzio, and now I see you're nothing but an ox!" But next day he attempted fresh persuasion. He would have dearly loved to thrash the general. In the end he ceased to beg or to explain. He bellowed, and ordered Zeligowski to disobey government orders, mutiny, and march on Vilna.

Never in his whole life before had Zeligowski met so

much insistence. How could he tell? Pilsudski might be right after all; perhaps there was only one way of making his small beloved Vilna a part of his larger country. Even his resistance began to waver. He was exhausted; and, besides, he could not refuse a definite order from his Chief. He had swallowed with an immense effort such oaths as only the Russian army can provide. In the end he marched on Vilna.

The Lithuanian government intended to establish itself in Vilna. It had begun to transfer there from Kowno when news of the Polish advance fell like a bomb. Nobody knew the exact strength of the Poles; nobody dared to put up any serious resistance. Government offices with the paint still wet on their doors were deserted head over heels. On October the 8th Lithuanians sent a deputation to negotiate with Zeligowski.

But the general refused to receive them. He straightened himself and sent them their answer. "We haven't come to fight. We're coming home." Next day, at the head of his men, he entered Vilna. While his regiments invested the city from the south, the Lithuanian defenders abandoned it along roads to the north and east, which led into the heart of Lithuania. A "glorious victory" was proclaimed. Very few shots had been fired, and scarcely a man had fallen; but General Zeligowski felt that he deserved all the many laurels. He was a victor, a liberator. He slapped his thighs in their ill-fitting regimentals and laughed. "This Pilsudski was a devil of a chap. The ideas the man had! Now he's got us Vilna into the bargain!"

And this old soldier was proud and full of gratitude that Vilna should be Polish at last—that he himself should have made this latest conquest. It seemed like a gift of God. But when he thought the whole matter over he be-

gan again to shake with laughter. No doubts disturbed his joy. He had found "political action" very pleasant.

Abroad the affair stirred up a hornets' nest. Was this Poland with her crazy Pilsudski threatening the peace of Europe again? Notes flew from government to government. Telegrams in cypher arrived from the ministries of half a dozen capitals. Diplomats in Warsaw were up in arms. They scrambled into their morning coats, and rushed to besiege the Chief of State.

Pilsudski received them with solemnity. He promised, gave assurances, anathematized. This damned Zeligowski —the scoundrel! Setting the peace of Europe upside down! He'd soon teach him to obey the orders of his government. Unheard of—this whole silly business! Making war on his own responsibility! How could he have thought of such a thing? He should be ordered to retreat and get out of Vilna at once—or he might not be a general much longer.

The diplomats shed their morning coats. Their secretaries despatched soothing telegrams. The powers began to calm down. The Chief of State had promised that within a few days the Vilna question would be settled.

Zeligowski the liberator stayed in Vilna: Zeligowski the hero remained a Polish general.

Pilsudski possessed in Vilna a city where he could spend rare holidays, could revive the memories of his youth, could dream, in the great cathedral's shadow, of the boy who, forty years before, had longed to be a man who realized dreams.

CHAPTER V

CHIEF OF STATE

DEMOCRACY, as it is known in the west, and modern parliamentary government had always been aspirations of the pioneers of Polish liberty, and Pilsudski, also, since his young days, had shared the ideas of western democracy.

As Chief of State, he had wished, first and foremost, to build up a co-ordinated whole. If Poland were to be set on a footing of equality with the west and receive equal treatment from Europe, her government must be constitutional.

When the first Sejm had assembled in Warsaw to prepare the new Polish constitution, Pilsudski had hoped that westernization was on the way.

But it very soon grew apparent that neither constitution nor parliament had taken on the forms of which he dreamed. The country was, as yet, unformed politically. Past lack of political independence meant lack of political science and tradition. The Sejm scarcely knew how to manage this new and liberal constitution. Partizan-spirit and individualism produced ever more political groups, who divided the land into dozens of hostile camps. And except for the two or three great parties which dated from before the war, none possessed a clear and definite programme.

Pilsudski himself had no clear programme, but he could substitute a keen sense of realities, and the advantages of

his own unique position which allowed him to use exceptional methods. His policies were decided from day to day. He liked to wait till it was almost time to act, and select whichever course seemed most suitable for the necessities of any given moment. His life's ambition—an ambition which might have demanded its party programme—Polish independence—had been realized. Now there was no other idea which could take such possession of his mind.

As a rule it was his custom, since he was not in the habit of sharing thoughts and conclusions, to submit faits accomplis to the nation through its representative the Sejm, which could proceed to accept or reject them.

The opposition such methods of procedure aroused became from day to day more vehement. Among party leaders the more independently minded refused to admit the right of any man to think or act on their behalf. Those political circles in particular, more awake and intelligent —and whose education in (or in any case their experience of) politics dated from before 1914—rebelled against this form of autocracy. The strongest opposition came from the National Democrats, who, next to the socialists, were the most self-reliant of the parties. They saw in Pilsudski not merely a political opponent whose opinions they did not share, but a despot who attempted to deny them the right to think, and would have liked, best of all, to gag them.

Moreover, for the National Democrats and kindred right wing parties, Pilsudski was nothing more than a successful and more or less fantastic adventurer, whose power and influence they did not intend should be permanent.

They refused to see the Chief of State as in any way an exceptional figure—a man to whom it might, at times,

be necessary to sacrifice convictions or programmes. The virtues of that true and seasoned democracy whose traditional common sense will sometimes sink all differences in the will of a single man—virtues of which American democracy is an example—were necessarily unknown in the new state.

Prior to 1918 Poland's abnormal political situation had produced a distorted strength which explained the strong individualism of Polish politics.

In the Sejm opposition grew and grew. To Pilsudski, as time went on, the Sejm became a power which united every force that opposed him, his methods or his objects. He fancied that he could see a revival of the worst sides of Poland's party spirit, all the helplessness and self-contradiction of those earlier Sejms which, a century and a half ago, had been especially instrumental in causing the Polish downfall. These Sejms had possessed a right of veto born of crass self-sufficiency and individualism, which gave each member the power to reverse a decision of the Chamber and prevent any measure from being carried. In this way nothing could be decided; there was always one member ready to veto. This grotesque system had made all law and government impossible; it had reduced Poland to such a state of weakness and disorder that it was easy enough for foreign powers to partition her. Pilsudski, who had a sense of history, saw evil visions of these Sejms, with their right to impede all law. His hostility to the Sejm did not diminish.

The battle which, little by little, was engaged between himself and the Sejm, was not so much the result of conflict between the Chief of State and any particular opposition, as a struggle of forces, each of which stood at opposite poles of political thought.

Pilsudski, who seemed an especially vigorous incarnation of mediævalism, could only impose through sheer strength of personality. He could revive the laws of a past which had seemed dead; a gothic fanaticism was part of the boundlessness of his faith; his self-absorption seemed the echo of a Renaissance, which had gloried in the supreme individual.

His every instinct protested against having to give way to a new power. He had been an enthusiastic democrat and had not only honoured democracy but had really intended to submit to it. But he had always imagined that Polish democracy would go to work with as much enthusiasm as had inspired his own every action. For the moment he saw in the Sejm no power strong enough to set up a leadership which could really have replaced his own. In the Sejm he faced a divided body of men, who were all unwilling to sacrifice self-love, but who pursued individual objects and split up into a dozen different parties. Submission seemed far too great a price for any success he might achieve with them.

His mistrust of the Parliament was answered by further opposition, both within and without the Sejm. His opponents criticized his measures before he had really had time to put them into action, or could see how they would be likely to work out. In early years his friends had been sceptical of the success of his plans; not till much later had they been able to convince themselves of the rightness of what he had done. People who did not know him intimately were quite unfitted to judge his actions and the unexpected and usually very complicated turns of his thought.

But not only his opponents at home were sceptical of the Chief of State. Foreigners, too, who had come into

THE BELVEDERE PALACE DURING THE *COUP D'ETAT*

touch with Polish politics and their leader were only very seldom in sympathy with Pilsudski's plans and decisions. For most political visitors to Poland the Chief of State was an enigma. Either he repelled them or they let themselves be captivated. Representatives of those foreign powers in which the Chief of State took special interest were treated with a compelling courtesy which they seldom knew how to resist. Some leaders of the French military mission had fallen before him in a very short time, and had had, in the end, to be recalled. They had come to Poland to exercise control, to supervise, to arbitrate, and in general to make French influence felt. But they allowed Pilsudski to sway them to such a point that they lost all critical sense and, instead of giving facts, sent to Paris reports in which they repeated the Chief of State's opinions and quoted him as a military authority.

But Pilsudski, in whom the west did not believe, confided in very few foreign diplomats. Among the few who had succeeded in getting on to terms with him which transcended politics and took on a really friendly character, was the Papal Nuncio, Achille Ratti.

Ratti had come to Poland as far back as in 1917 as Legate of Pope Benedict XV. At first, therefore, his functions had been purely ecclesiastical. But when Poland became an independent State, the Pope named him his temporal representative and created him Papal Nuncio. Achille Ratti had heard of Pilsudski's agnosticism. But Pilsudski who, all his life, had stood apart from the Church, was well aware of her importance in the Polish State and took special care to remain on the best terms with Rome. He went out of his way to make his good intentions clear to the Nuncio, and when Ratti in his new official capacity came in state to present his credentials, he made it an oc-

casion of special ceremony. On this occasion he made a speech which every good Catholic must have welcomed. He was determined to have the Nuncio as a friend, since Ratti was very popular in political circles all over Warsaw.

The ex-director of the Ambrosiana in Milan and, later, of the Vatican Library, was renowned for his scholarship. The society, therefore, which he had frequented since his arrival in Poland, had not been entirely ecclesiastical, but included the chief intellectual circles of the capital. Thanks to his many activities, which took him on continual journeys into the furthest corners of Poland and into most of the neighbouring states as well, he had managed in a very short while to get an insight into Polish idiosyncrasies, which had given him a real knowledge of the country.

Though Pilsudski regarded foreign diplomats and, indeed, all foreigners with suspicion, he found many traits in Ratti which gave him a special sympathy for the Nuncio; Ratti's freshness of vision was exactly what his mistrustful nature required. And he esteemed the Nuncio's real love of Poland and willingness to make sacrifices on her behalf. When, in August 1920, during the Bolshevik advance, Ratti refused to leave Warsaw, he saw it as an especially good omen, and an action for which he felt duly grateful.

Pilsudski was peculiarly sensitive in all matters of Polish prestige. He was especially impressed when Ratti, on his appointment to an archbishopric, chose not to go to Rome for consecration, but preferred to receive the holy oil in Warsaw. In this fashion he also became a Polish bishop. This consecration, also, Pilsudski made especially ceremonious. In addition to the clergy and members of the diplomatic corps, ministers and generals, including

the prime minister, were present in the Cathedral of St. Jan. On a special chair, well apart, sat the Chief of State. He had demonstrated to all and sundry that he was the friend of the Papal Legate and of the Church.

Ratti possessed real priestly sympathy. The sorrows and dangers through which Pilsudski had had to pass aroused his deepest interest. He was always very willing to be charmed by the glamour of Pilsudski's conversation. The ramifications of Pilsudski's intellect interested him as philosopher and historian. Their talks were always in French. Pilsudski's French was fluent; but his pronounced accent, an accent rather Slavonic than Polish, gave his French a very singular quality. The foreign language would compel him to strange and often quaint turns of phrase, to which the Nuncio listened with quiet enjoyment. The personality of this singular Polish-Lithuanian nobleman fascinated him.

The strange atmosphere which clung round an ex-revolutionary interested an ecclesiastical scholar, who, till now, had only met such people in books. For this reason he not only enjoyed meeting Pilsudski himself, but also his early friends and fellow-workers. Ratti admitted that for the Chief of State he had a very warm corner in his heart. When the British representative, Sir Horace Rumbold, asked him his opinion of Pilsudski he replied—"Whenever I see the Marshal I tell him that I don't agree with him and that his decisions and policy are a mistake. Usually he laughs at me. But later I can see that he was always right and I wrong. And he knows it perfectly well."

While the Nuncio's sympathy for Pilsudski had its roots in sentiment and affection, Pilsudski's for Ratti had an undercurrent of ecclesiastical policy. For the clergy in general and especially for the upper ranks of the hierarchy

Pilsudski had never had much sympathy. Prince Sapiëha, the Bishop of Cracow, and Teodorowicz, Archbishop of Lemberg, were among the most eminent Polish ecclesiastics. Bishop Sapiëha, in years gone by, had been sceptical of Pilsudski's efforts to form his legions. Teodorowicz, whose interest in politics seemed greater than in the affairs of the Church, was a favourite of the National Democrats. Pilsudski had every reason for not being any too well-disposed to either of these clerics. When he learnt that, at an ecclesiastical congress, Ratti, who had not long been received as Legate, and was at that time simply a Canon, had been treated with scant respect by these two princes of the Church, he had conceived an instant sympathy for him. Later he learnt with grim delight that Ratti, on his election to the Papacy, had forbidden the two archbishops to seek election to the Senate. Sapiëha and Teodorowicz, who hoped to become senators in order to gain political influence, were forced at the last minute to withdraw. During his stay in Poland the new Pope had had opportunities of judging for himself how it weakens the power of the Church when priests take part in daily political bickerings.

Achille Ratti was one of the very few foreign representatives with whom the Chief of State was on close terms. He found little time for the society of people whom, occasionally, he would take great pains to charm, in whom from time to time he was vaguely interested, but who seemed too different from himself to permit of any closer contact.

Even when Marshal Foch visited Warsaw Pilsudski could not adopt a tone of such cordiality as political discretion might have demanded. He admired Foch, but rather suspected that he did not give the military capaci-

ties of Poland's First Field Marshal their due weight. With Foch he could never quite avoid the sensations which successful professionalism will sometimes arouse in the self-instructed. His was the pride of the self-taught—of the amateur who feels himself equal to any professional. But this mingled with some uncertainty which, in spite of his every effort, he was not always able to conceal. He could never forget that in 1920 Foch had condemned the Ukrainian campaign: "Il ne fallait pas courir des aventures."

He had felt far more at ease with the civil representatives of France. When, towards the end of 1920, the French Ambassador invited him to Paris in the name of the French Government, he was delighted to accept the invitation. Now he could appear abroad and show himself to the world as the saviour and leader of Poland. Moreover, neither of his hosts, Millerand the President, nor the Premier, Aristide Briand, had anything very military about him. On the whole he had a certain contempt for civilians, though in Paris he was glad that his chief hosts were not generals. And, moreover, he brought back a French treaty.

Certainly cordial friendship with the civilian Briand was more possible to him than with General Foch, who had been given the courtesy title of marshal in the Polish army.

But inward conflict and daily dissensions with the Sejm, the indifference of public opinion and the thousand and one impediments in the new machinery of state, which ran badly and more than once threatened to fall to pieces, depressed Pilsudski. He looked forward without regret to the day when he could relinquish the highest office in the land. The opposition feared that at presidential elections

Pilsudski might be returned as first President of the new Republic. They had managed, in laying down the new constitution, to assure themselves against all eventualities by reducing the presidential rights to the point where the President became a lay figure. They hoped in this way to keep the probable future president out of politics. But Pilsudski, though he looked forward with a certain relief to the approaching end of his days at the Belvedere, had no intention of letting himself be condemned to inactivity. The army and its future were the things which lay nearest to his heart. In military affairs he refused to surrender his right to decisive influence.

As usual, he shared his thoughts with nobody, and parties were in the dark as to the electoral intentions of the Chief. But Pilsudski's power and influence were too great to make it feasible to proceed to elections without foreknowledge of his eventual choice of candidature. A few days before the election the left wing of the Sejm approached him with the offer to make him their candidate for the Presidency. He neither accepted nor declined. He did not state, until shortly before the eve of the elections, that he had no intention of standing. Poland and the Sejm were astonished—the Marshal had renounced the highest constitutional honours.

The opposition noted that he did not intend to retire from politics.

December 9, 1922 was the date of Poland's first presidential election. Gabriel Narutowicz, a friend of the Marshal's, was elected.

Narutowicz had been Minister for Foreign Affairs, and was known to be in Pilsudski's confidence.

Till the end of the war he had lived in Switzerland: he was one of those Poles scattered far and wide about the

world who, before the war, had found the yoke of Russian government and the narrowness of Polish life intolerable, and had preferred to settle down in foreign countries, where their chances of success were much greater than they ever could have been at home. He was well-known as an engineer; was a man of wide culture and fervent patriotism, who, none the less, as a result of years abroad, had managed to exchange his national prejudices for the reasoned ethic of western democracy. Pilsudski had got to know him after the war. Narutowicz came from the same part of the country as the Pilsudskis. His family were Polish nobles, settled in Lithuania, who, like the Pilsudskis, bore no title, and on this account were especially esteemed by the Marshal. Their friendship had been cemented when Narutowicz became Foreign Minister. Narutowicz admired the Marshal profoundly. Pilsudski, in his eyes, was the man who had freed his country. Pilsudski could sense this feeling, and was pleased with his Foreign Minister's quiet devotion, which seemed almost a personal tribute from foreign countries.

Moreover, Narutowicz was a good listener, and the Chief of State could talk to him through half the night about the legions and his own past life. He might be said to be one of the Marshal's closest friends.

Narutowicz's election to the Presidency was a grievous blow to the opposition. Political indiscipline and inexperience caused an agitation against him, so fanatical that it shrank before no methods. The right could see that it was useless to attempt to fight Pilsudski, and attacked his supporters and friends as easier game. A lawless political war was declared on the new President. His enemies hoped that they could strike, through him, at the Marshal. And Pilsudski himself would often notice on

dark nights the most suspicious-looking figures lurking round the gardens of the Belvedere.

Unrest was on the increase. When the new President drove to the Sejm to take his oath, right-wing agitators insulted him grossly and stoned his carriage. Narutowicz felt these insults very keenly; he knew they were intended for another man.

A few days later Pilsudski handed over the affairs of state to the first President. As the head of the government he received him in the Belvedere. He knew how much self-discipline Narutowicz had needed to accept this dangerous post, and how heavily it weighed on his shoulders. In spite of several years' work in Poland Narutowicz was still unaccustomed to the unscrupulous methods of politics. Pilsudski knew how he had felt the unmerited insults he received. He decided to show him special courtesy and welcome him in such a way as would make him forget the unpleasant side of office. "I, Mr. President, as sole executive commander of the Polish army, have never, till to-day, taken an order. But since you represent Poland, I will take my orders from you." Poland's First Marshal clicked his heels before drinking the President's health.

For a moment or two Narutowicz could forget the leaden skies beyond the window-panes, which the disordered streets made still more sombre—all the difficulties of life and office. Before him, standing at attention, was his great and compelling predecessor.

"History holds many famous names; the names of great men whose contemporaries were too dwarfed to judge them, or measure the services they rendered. You, Marshal, are to be numbered among these."

Two days later, the new President attended one of his

first public functions, the opening of the Warsaw Salon. The light was grey and obscured by thick, raw fog, which hung round streets coated with dirty snow. The jury of the Salon with the Prime Minister and several ambassadors received Narutowicz. The new British Representative, Max Müller, came to congratulate him on his election. Narutowicz answered with a smile—"Wouldn't it be better to condole with me?"

The writer Niewiadomski, one of the members of the jury, had quietly raised his arm. Three shots rang out, Narutowicz stared, his body twitched; he swayed, and fell to the ground.

Pilsudski's face went pale as he heard of the death of his friend. His own had, not long since, been prophesied. He shuddered. An almighty, nameless, ever distant, ever present Power, had spared his life.

Poor Narutowicz! So one more man had had to shield him with his body.

The murderer, an educated man, deposed at the trial that he had had no grudge against Narutowicz, who was not even known to him personally. All his hatred had been for the Marshal. In war-time and in the days before the war, he had had great admiration for Pilsudski. But now the Marshal was the tool of Jews and socialists; it was time he was put out of the way. He had corrupted Narutowicz to the service of the god to whom he had sold himself.

Niewiadomski declared that he had acted on his own initiative, and was not the instrument of a party. In politics, certainly, he belonged to the extreme right wing, but for the murder he alone was answerable; he alone had made the decision, as he alone had committed the crime.

His shot, when he aimed at the President, had been intended quite as much for the Marshal. Pilsudski had filled him with such hate that at last he could think of nothing but the necessity for getting him out of the world. He had no regrets. He begged that he might not be punished with an ignominious sentence of penal servitude and asked to be condemned to death. He was shot on the Citadel Hill. His last words were: "Long live Poland! Down with Pilsudski!" This name obsessed him to the end.

Pilsudski was tempted, in the first moments after the murder, to take advantage of the general consternation, the horror and fear of the right wing, and make himself dictator of Poland. But it would have been a defiance of fate to use the corpse of his friend as a step to supreme power. His alert instinct had taught him caution.

The government resigned. Pilsudski was asked to form a Cabinet. He refused. In such a time of undirected fumbling and unchained partizan hate it seemed useless to engage in an aimless battle against Parliament. For the moment he only cared about the army; it must not be allowed to get into other hands. He named as Prime Minister the General-in-Chief of his staff, whose appointment he was content to fill in exchange.

The end of the year saw a new Presidential election.

The President was Stanislaw Wojciechowski. A quarter of a century before he had worked in London as compositor in the offices of "Aurore," and had accompanied Pilsudski to Vilna to help him print and publish "The Worker." He had grown up amid all the anxieties of the socialist struggle and was now prematurely aged. He had remained as poor at the end of thirty years' hard work as he was in his days as a compositor. He had great reverence for the office of President. At the time of the election

he was a professor in the Warsaw University. He loved Pilsudski and easily allowed himself to be swayed by him. He had no unshakable political convictions, and was very easily influenced by others. Though he passed for Pilsudski's candidate, the Marshal's enemies succeeded in winning him over. In July he confided the formation of a new government to Witos, the leader of the Peasants' Party, whose sympathies were all with the right.

Pilsudski's bitterness increased. Witos had already been asked to form one government. His election cry had been "Long live Pilsudski." But now he made common cause with Pilsudski's worst enemies. The Marshal did not expect the Sejm to support him, but from Wojciechowski, his friend and comrade, he had hoped for greater powers of resistance. Shortly after the new Cabinet was formed the Sejm decided to publish a manifesto— "Josef Pilsudski has earned the people's gratitude both as Commander and Chief of State."

These official honours were a novelty. The government hoped to soften the offended Marshal. But Pilsudski was no longer young enough to be very impressed by public honours. He despised both the government and the Sejm. If a constellation were unfavourable, it was wiser, he felt, to wait in the dark than to attempt to walk by its light.

He was heartily sick of the intrigues and corruption of politics, and felt too exhausted to continue his fight with the opposition. Cabinet intrigue had robbed him of all pleasure in the army. He could see no way.

He sent his papers and retired.

He left Warsaw. He had neither money nor means of livelihood. But his soldiers adored him; he was at once their legend and their hero. He had built up their regiments from nothing and led them on to victory. A few

years previously his men had subscribed and bought him a house in Sulejowek, in the neighbourhood of the capital. They had been poor, so the house was a modest one. But it was gabled, had wide steps to its door, and its front was painted white. The soldiers were very proud of their house, and into it "Dziadek" retired.

Pilsudski had never been used to luxuries. His new house was infinitely more comfortable than the cells in Irkutsk, Tunka and Petersburg, than the Citadel or even the Magdeburg arrest house.

From the bottom of his heart he thanked his soldiers.

BOOK THREE

CHAPTER I

EXILE

PILSUDSKI regarded his days in Sulejowek as a period of voluntary exile into which he had been forced by his countrymen's pettiness and ingratitude. He was profoundly disillusioned when the country allowed him to retire. Between Poland and himself he saw a gulf —in his countrymen a force of ever-increasing hostility.

When, in 1919, at Versailles, Polish independence had been declared, and, in the following year, ratified, he had believed that he could begin at once to realize all the things that had been the dream of generations. He did not stop to consider that the problems which confronted the new state were even more difficult of solution than those which faced the rest of Europe.

Poland's western neighbours had to cope with the one acute difficulty entailed in the moral and material enfeeblement of capitalism and the perception of a new social reality. Poland in addition had to build up a new state.

And this new state was not such a unity as for instance her neighbour, the Czechoslovakian Republic. She was composed of three separate elements which, since the partition, had been affiliated to three different governments and modes of life.

Poland, too, had her social problem to solve, and had, moreover, to perform all the tasks entailed in the building up of new and very complex governmental machinery—tasks which demanded a new spirit.

Reconstruction, therefore, was harder and more many-sided; it involved a more radical up-rooting than in the case of most other western countries.

A will, an inner unity, an unusual spirit of sacrifice, were indispensable if the nation were to gather strength to face the demands of the times. And Poles were not always equal to these demands. They had striven for independence for more than a hundred years, and it had been an intoxicating dream, whose fulfilment had been set forth in glowing colours.

But with independence came reality—a reality whose many darker aspects had never before been visible. Daily and prosaic burdens weighed heavier far than any accustomed hardship of pre-war days, since, before, it had been a case of reforms whose extent, at least, was known, and which therefore were much easier to envisage. Before the war Poland had had no responsibilities, none of the cares of the new state. Disillusionment spread. Independence and freedom had been ideals. In every-day life their realization soon ceased to be perceptible, while disadvantages were patent on every side. Moreover, public opinion was still not educated enough to grasp the extent of present difficulties. The maturity of mind for their solution would have to be a matter of years. Pilsudski was more deceived than anybody.

He could always see the main peaks along a road, but never the many weary stretches of flat and stony ground which lay between them, and which, none the less, had to be covered. He was out of sympathy with grey prosaic necessities, had the sense only of summits to be scaled in a mood of courage and exaltation. It was so in every matter of daily life. If he thought of the army he would see legions—the "First Brigade" of Polish military

strength; a force its own momentum had built up, its youthful devotion and enthusiasms—not an average body of men. To the word "people" the meaning he attached was similar. It was invested with every glamour lent it by history and literature. For him, a people's life was a series of those sudden, heroic adventures of which only the best in any nation can be capable. He could never realize all the years of toil and preparation on the part of unknown millions which make such efforts possible to the few. History, with all a nation's greatness and achievement, meant the heroism of a single leader and of groups of specially gifted pioneers. Whatever came behind them and supported them was invisible and at the same time alien. He refused to look at it.

So his interest in the people was romantic. The petty ambitions, narrow thoughts, cramped feelings, little failings and virtues—the daily habits and necessities, joys and sorrows of the poor, were things in which he took no interest. Though all his life he had helped lead the party of the masses, he himself had remained detached from them. He did not know the people's ways of thought.

He had never found it difficult to renounce the small pleasures of every day. He could not understand why the people should find it any harder. Material possessions meant nothing to him; he expected everyone else to do without them. But he began to think that his people had no desire for further heights; they preferred, once an achievement had been reached, to remain for ever idle, a prey to habit and to sloth. He had expected that freedom would lead to some inner transformation, that independence would be enough in itself to bring spiritual endowment on his countrymen. He could see many practical ways of carrying

out ideas, but he failed to perceive the realities which rule and guide a country as a whole.

The financial catastrophe, which in Poland was even more terrible than elsewhere, filled him with alarm. But he had no clear remedy to offer. He took no interest in, had no sense of, economic cause and effect. Economic necessities seemed a hindrance to every heroic achievement. But he felt that the country would be able to overcome all the horrors of general impoverishment and inflation if people could once be induced to make an effort and sacrifice to the general welfare their small desires and ambitions. He had seen all the selflessness of his countrymen in preparing his victory over the Bolsheviks, and in peacetime he demanded the same. He could never understand that people must think first of themselves, only second of the needs of their country. He identified Poland with himself; for his aims, therefore, Poland should be ready with every sacrifice.

He had hoped that the nation would share his military enthusiasm and help him to create a strong Polish army. An army of her own had been enslaved Poland's fondest dream. He wanted, now, to make that dream come true. The army must be formidable—a pattern of organization. It must be the finest army in the world!

But the public had other views. Now that the war was over Poles refused to make any further sacrifices for something they did not consider necessary. It was Pilsudski's bitterest disillusionment. He could not understand how the nation could fail to think as her élite—the men who had fought to win her freedom—had thought over twenty years before. This lack of enthusiasm for the army seemed almost a personal insult. His contempt for "These Poles" increased.

Pilsudski kept people more and more at a distance in spite of devoted friends from pre-war days and the days when he had been forming his legions. Their devotion seemed to him a matter of course. At first he had always mistrusted individuals. Later his misanthropy had been apparent in his fashion of dealing with the public, with events, and indeed, with the whole of life. Now he turned from individuals again.

In his private life he had not escaped the bitterest disappointments. His marriage had turned out a failure. Even in Cracow days, before the war, wedlock had brought disillusionment. Mme. Maria was, by temperament, vivacious; she needed people around her, constant variety and change. She surrounded herself with friends and acquaintance till their house was always full of noisy life. In those early days Pilsudski's exhausting work made him long for rest and quiet, but Mme. Maria hated solitude. The constant stream of visitors through their house, the noisy vivacity of his wife, got more and more on his nerves. Existence together became unbearable. His hopes of a child, a son who should bear his name, were disappointed. Nothing kept them together. Common memories were often too unpleasant to serve as a bond between the pair. Pilsudski asked his wife to set him free.

But Mme. Maria, whose beauty had faded with the years and whose wit had turned bitter and sardonic, clung to him with all the desperate passion of an ageing and helpless woman. Though the two lived apart and scarcely met, she never for a moment thought of renouncing Josef Pilsudski. When she learnt that another woman had borne her husband two children her early love turned hate.

Pilsudski began to despair. He pitied Mme. Maria; he knew that he had much to thank her for. But he could

not go on living with her, though the solitude of his private life weighed heavily. He wanted to live with the mother of his daughters, but as Chief of the Polish State and Commander of the Polish Army he could live with no woman but his wife.

Then Mme. Maria died. He was free; need no longer be alone and go in secret to visit the mother of his children. Mme. Ola moved to the Belvedere; now that she bore his name she could live with the Chief of State. She was tranquil and brought him rest. She loved her husband and could understand the strangeness of his ways. She was much younger than he, yet she treated him as though he were a child, with all a mother's tender understanding. Pilsudski found rest instead of noise and chatter, a peace for which he had longed for years. His wife knew how to listen; his cares and activities interested her. She was no stranger to politics and social activities, had worked independently for some time. She had energy and level judgment, which enabled her to help him without his ever being aware of it.

Pilsudski grew fonder and fonder of his daughters. Jadwiga and Wanda could make up to him for many disappointments and bitter hours. His impulse to convert which, in essence, meant to teach and enlighten, could find unimpeded satisfaction. He himself gave his children their lessons. His passion for story-telling found its outlet in hour-long stories, which he told for his own pleasure as much as theirs—stories of his adventures as a boy, or, better still, of legions and the years in which he had created them: stories of Kasztanka the mare.

Others he made up—endless fairy tales which he would spin out for ever and ever, but which he loved to end with a moral. Not only his cares were forgotten, the real

world about him ceased to matter, in these hours he spent with his children. Though his fairy tales even, happened in a setting of reality, he could transmute them, with his vivid, curious style, into a series of pictures in which reality fused with dreams—set a sheen of romance over everything with a gift and passion of his own. In these stories he lived his own life over again, but a life nearer his heart, free of all the dross of the world.

The hours with "Jagodka" and "Wandulka" could make him forget his bitterness. He could never remember having laughed so whole-heartedly as when he was alone with his children.

He was proud that his daughters, the daughters of Poland's First Marshal, of the first leader of an independent Polish State, should grow up in poverty. He had always been accustomed to plain living. Money had neither worth nor attraction for him; he despised it, since in his eyes it impeded every effort towards greatness. He had lived, during his years as Chief of State, as poorly as in his days as a socialist. Moreover, he was helpless in money matters, with which he had no notion how to deal. He had had to meet all the expenses of official entertaining out of his salary as Chief of State. Though he disliked social functions, he could not avoid all diplomatic usage, and had often to hold receptions at the Belvedere. In July it had been very difficult; there had been two national celebrations, American and French, which compelled him to give two receptions. The expenses for these had swallowed up almost all his meagre official salary. For the last eight days of the month there had been little money left in the Belvedere. Even when the Prime Minister or the Speaker of the Sejm came to supper with him, host, guest and the officers of the suite had to content themselves with a dish

of macaroni, slices of bread and butter and tea. He had never, in all his life, managed to save; moreover, he would have considered it incompatible with his office and his mission to do so.

In Sulejowek life was even simpler. His pension as Marshal and Chief of State went on various charitable objects; he spent it, down to the very last farthing, on war-widows and orphans, various military societies, and the university of Vilna. He refused to take the pay of a Republic he despised.

It was his point of honour to live by the convictions he had preached. Friends and admirers made him presents—cars, thoroughbreds, art treasures, jewellery and dainties. He gave them all away again. He cared only to keep his independence and be under no kind of obligation. The few pence which he could manage to scrape together by writing, had to keep himself and his family. Every day he would sit for many hours at his desk. But his earnings were precarious; his children dressed very simply; Mme. Ola had often to sit up half the night darning and patching. His children's petticoats were made to last for years, and were only replaced when it seemed useless to patch them further. Even their dolls were mended; but at Christmas and Easter a parcel would arrive from Rome with a letter inside it from the Pope. His Holiness Pius XI had sent blessed rosaries and pretty pictures of the saints for the children to his old friend.

The summer was spent in the little summer resort, Druskieniki. This holiday meant double economies. The rent had to be paid. They could not afford a flat with a kitchen; meals had to be brought in from outside. Pilsudski's batman would go to a neighbouring pension every

day and return with two portions of dinner, which had to be enough for the whole family.

Pilsudski wrote books and occasional articles. He grew bitter whenever he spoke of current political events or touched on the state of Poland. His vehement parti-pris was a hindrance to all objectivity. He wrote a book on the campaign of 1920 in defence of his action in the Ukraine. A defence of his methods and strategy became a polemic in which he attacked past colleagues, officers and generals. It made no difference whether they had been against him from the first or only recently incurred his wrath. When individuals could not be brought to book, since there were no grounds on which to attack them, he accused the nation as a whole. His style was impassioned, vivid, spontaneous. These written recollections and criticism worked off his fighting energy: they also dispelled his bitterness.

Pilsudski had retired from active politics, but he followed events in Warsaw very keenly. Friends and former colleagues often came to Sulejowek. Politics would be discussed and criticized, the past lived over again. And there were visitors from all parts of the world. Politicians, statesmen and writers would arrive at the little white house to visit "Poland's greatest man," see the first Polish citizen face to face and listen to his opinions. As a rule they went away impressed.

Pilsudski watched the capital with interest. But politics still came second; the army lay nearest his heart. His name carried too much weight among soldiers to allow of the government's ignoring it in any important military decision. These days of voluntary exile lent further power and glamour to the legend which even in the nineties had

been attached to his name, and had become more glorious ever since. For millions he was a tragic hero, whose colossal strength expended in the service of his country had only been repaid with ingratitude. This ageing man, living in retirement at Sulejowek in a poverty known to very few, took on the dimensions of a Prometheus. His fate, as sombre as it was noble, gave the public imagination ample food. In popular legend the part he played was unique. Before him it had only been allotted to the national heroes of bygone days. In government circles he was feared; every effort was made to nullify his influence. But the ministers did not dare ignore his unofficial power, and go on their way without him.

And Pilsudski knew the position. He took care that his indirect decisions were not ignored. When, in the autumn of 1925, on the appointment of a new Minister for War, the attempt was made to set him aside and a general known as his enemy was considered, the Marshal, roused from his official lethargy, went to Warsaw, where he interviewed the President, whom he warned. Next day, twenty generals and four hundred regular army officers arrived in the little villa at Sulejowek to assure him of their loyalty and support. The government had no courage to oppose them; they included the most popular and efficient officers in the country. Warsaw had not the strength to follow out a policy which Pilsudski would have regarded as a challenge. General Zeligowski, the Marshal's trusted friend, was appointed Minister for War.

CHAPTER II

ARS MYSTICA

Pilsudski's belief in a special power which protected and guided him in secret was strengthened with the passing years. His attitude to life had led him to perceive a thread of logic through every twist and turn of his fate; his destiny worked itself out in accordance with an inner, hidden law.

He had never had much feeling for religion. God was a name he had read in prayer-books or heard from the altar steps. He could see no connection between his life and the dogmas and rites of Roman Catholicism, the creed to which he had been born. Though he would brood for hours on semi-religious, metaphysical, even mystical themes, he professed no particular occult or religious philosophy. His belief in the uniqueness of his destiny which a logic of his own confirmed—the ego-centric nature of even his most abstract thought—made it impossible to submit his mind to the teachings of any system. He was a stranger to any process of reasoning which demands unimpeachable deduction and clear proof. Thus, even his belief in his destiny and the theorizings into which it led him were the result of no reasoned insight—no definite and lucidly stated, though at the same time individualized, perception—but had their roots in emotion. The soil from which his emotion sprang had strata of subconscious perception and conscious concentration of thought and feeling. On it he attempted to build the most

complex intellectual structure. He supported his faith with dim and tortuous argument; could perceive a hidden law which appeared to have directed his whole life, but could define it in no clear terms, no matter how stubbornly and persistently he tried.

Not only did he believe himself the object of special election; he felt that he possessed unusual faculties not granted to other human beings. He was proud of his intuition, which he considered his most formidable weapon, had as much faith in its flashes of sudden insight as in intuitive concepts, the result of protracted brooding. He would often call this faculty prophetic.

But he sought confirmation in other men. He enjoyed expounding theories and telling experiences. At meals, or over the glass of tea which followed them, he loved to rummage among past happenings which seemed to endorse his belief.

A favourite was an experience from his early Siberian days. He had met an old woman on one of his solitary walks. She had stared at him, started, shrieked, and begun to run away. Pilsudski had pulled her back and asked why she behaved so oddly. The old woman refused to answer. At last, after much persuasion, she had said "Ty budjesch Zariom." ("You will be a Czar.")

He would try to make others believe in his particular election—tell stories to convince them which suggested the fantastic devotion which he could always arouse in other people.

In Cracow, years before the war, when he had just begun to organize his gunmen and was known to comparatively few and only as a daring revolutionary—two shabby old maids had come to see him. They were too shy to look him in the face. They had begged him, almost in a whis-

per, to accept the whole of their savings, and use them to swell his army fund and help prepare the liberation. He accepted. They thanked him as fervently as though he had given them a treasure, and left him with tremulous blessings and the assurance of their daily prayers.

Pilsudski felt that his life had been dogged by repetitions; each series of events had built its climax. He could discover connections and parallels which strengthened his dim, intuitive faith. He was superstitious; would observe very carefully the hands of any person with whom he was brought into relationship. He believed that in their lines and shape he could divine the success or failure of the connection. He was certain that the number thirteen had played a decisive part in his life, and had influenced its most critical junctures. Often, as they talked together in the evening, he would remind his adjutants that the turning-points in his destiny had had some connection with thirteen, or, in any case, with a number very near it. There had been thirteen prisoners on the eventful convoy to Siberia. The first number of "The Worker" had appeared on the eve of the 13th, on July 12, 1894. He had escaped from the asylum at St. Petersburg on May 13, 1899. November 13, 1904 was the date of the bloody demonstration on the Place Grzybowski in Warsaw, his first open battle with Russia. On the 12th of August 1914 the legions had taken Kielce, the first town in Russian Poland to fall in the course of the campaign. In 1918, between the 11th and the 14th of November, he had become the head of the new, free Polish state. On August 13, 1920 the plan of a victorious attack against the Russians had been declared and so made a reality. The 13th of June, two months earlier, had seen the evacuation of Kiev, which had begun the whole great northern campaign.

And he believed in some hidden connection between rivers and the turning-points in his life. He had discerned an order among rivers, which he could not regard as haphazard. Their waters flowed like a kind of undertone to his destiny; in their rushing he could hear a necessary accompaniment to his deeds; he saw in them the symbols of his course. Had not the Mojka, which he had seen for the first time on the evening of his escape from the Asylum, been like his fate when he saw it? It had flowed quietly through the dark. And when his secret warfare had been exchanged for noisy and open battle the new turn in his fate had brought along with it the thunderous, turbulent element in rivers. His way in the first days with his legions had been barred and his ears been deafened by the rushing music of the Nida and the Dunajec in spate. The broad Elbe had smiled on him as he came out through the fortress gates at Magdeburg and took his first steps towards fresh and greater achievement. Then came the miracle of the river, the miracle which had saved all Poland. Subdued music—the angry rush of foaming waters—no longer accompanied his deeds. The greatest river in his country, a river which flowed on out of Poland into the whole wide Europe beyond—the Vistula—had seen the climax of his destiny. He had ceased to be a conspirator or a rebel, had become the head of a people, a leader, to whom for one hour it was granted to hold in his hands the future of Europe.

Though Pilsudski had faith in the achievements of modern science and civilization and respected the scientific method, he also believed in secret forces at work in the world other than the forces of matter. They were beyond scientific control; could never be clearly apprehended by methods of thought or sensual perception. In the smallest

things of every day he could trace a connection with great events. A game of patience, therefore, both distracted him and increased his power to concentrate. Coming events cast their shadows. A game of patience was a presage of the division of forces in any future action. The event the world would see lay here in the cards, before it had happened in reality; and action was nothing but its exemplification through matter. Any event which, later, in the world would take on material shape, could be forced to reveal itself beforehand. He would attempt to control such foreshadowings and compel them into the pattern he desired, as though they were the future itself, and would therefore never abandon a patience, no matter how insoluble it appeared, but lay out again and again, and force the cards to yield him their solution.

He fought to impose his will on them. If a patience, in spite of every effort, refused, in the end, to come out, he would lose his temper, and curse it, violently, usually with Russian oaths. An unsuccessful patience, on the eve of any important decision, would bring on his very blackest mood; he would be restless, taciturn, incapable of speaking to anyone. When, after the fall of Kiev, he travelled to the Ukrainian capital, he spent the journey laying out one patience after another; in spite of hours of effort his chief patience refused to come out. Pilsudski cursed and frowned; it was as though he could see already the disaster which began with Kiev. He would lay with special care any patience which he knew had been a favourite with Napoleon.

Soon after the end of the Russian war, Pilsudski's Chief of Staff informed him that a brother of his wife's was said to possess unusual powers. This brother-in-law's name

was Ossowiecki. He was a Russianized Pole, who had not returned to Poland till after the war. Ossowiecki was a chemical engineer. Not until after the Revolution did he begin to take an interest in the occult. In a very short time he was celebrated as a result of a series of telepathic experiments. He had been called in to advise in a number of criminal cases, and his fame, as a clairvoyant, spread far and wide. He was jovial and round-faced, with superabundant vitality and suggested a self-satisfied, rather superficial Russian merchant from pre-war days rather than a dark seer who dived into the perilous depths of the occult. His knowledge was unco-ordinated. He was not concerned with any ethical possibilities of the occult, and was interested only in experiments. His beliefs were simple; they had neither the gravity of dogma nor the weight of scientific assertion. He believed himself to possess transcendental faculties, and strove to develop a natural gift of spiritual perception into a practical method of clairvoyance. As a thought-reader he had had successes, which brought him recognition in spiritual circles outside Poland.

When Pilsudski heard of this engineer's unusual faculties he expressed a desire to meet Ossowiecki. He took to to him at once. Ossowiecki had much of the vanity of the successful amateur, who possesses an unusual gift, which he has no need to systematize professionally. He was a little spoilt by the tributes of foreign spiritualists and the admiring devotion of society women. His temperament was slightly feminine—the kind of man frequently met with in the society of pre-war Moscow and St. Petersburg; and it pleased him to think that the great Marshal had asked to make his acquaintance. He was good-natured,

and ready to flatter, though he genuinely admired and believed in Pilsudski's greatness.

Pilsudski listened with interest to Ossowiecki's accounts of telepathic experiments and successes; he gave them in a broken Polish interspersed with many Russian words and much vivid gesticulation. Their first meeting was prolonged well into the small hours. Shortly afterwards Ossowiecki received a signed photograph of the Marshal with the inscription—"In memory of a talk about things which are not there and yet exist—Josef Pilsudski." Ossowiecki paid several visits to the Chief of State in the Belvedere and, later, in Sulejowek. Pilsudski wanted to talk to him of matters which he could expect few other people to understand.

But these conversations soon became monologues. Pilsudski gave instances of supernatural powers and experiences; he could speak with freedom to a man of proved and acknowledged transcendental faculties. He spoke of his intuition, which had enabled him to sense beforehand the greatest events in his life; of battles whose issues he had foreseen; of his own hypersensibility, that allowed him to people the world with shapes that were not in any space around him, and only seemed to be present in his mind. He recalled his self-communings in the Magdeburg fortress, and spoke of the possibility of summoning appearances out of the void. His vivid phantasy gave reality to these creatures of his brain, a reality which was almost tangible. This dramatic instinct, his love of speech, would impel him to address these visions, and engage with them in endless conversations. Realities soon ceased to be real, and Pilsudski would go up and down, or sit for hours, addressing phantoms who were all about him in the room.

At times his sense of drama was so vivid that he would begin to harangue them in verse, and even in the presence of a third, he would often choose this form of conversation. The theme did not matter in the least; he would talk of his plans, discuss his intentions and ideas, or tell his children stories in verse, and talk in verse on history and politics to his friends.

Pilsudski would sit half the night in a room blue with cigarette smoke, relating occult experience to Ossowiecki. And Ossowiecki, whose feeling for the Chief of State had at first been a somewhat conventional admiration, began to grow really attached to him. Here, he felt, was a man who, in a sense, possessed the very faculties of which he himself was so proud, but who had, in addition, all the power to achieve great material successes, successes which the world admired and honoured. He secretly envied the Chief of State his masculine power of achievement. Softness, feminine nerves and sensibility had been no part of the price which the Marshal had paid for his sixth sense; he possessed in addition all the strength and sternness of a man. Ossowiecki grew devoted to the Marshal, in whom he saw the hero of the century.

Pilsudski, after several years' acquaintanceship, proposed to the engineer that they should begin to experiment together. He wanted some demonstration of their power. It should be possible, he thought, to control supernatural forces, not only individually, in some dark and indemonstrable fashion, but consciously and deliberately to subdue them. Once this were done, there would be no more uncertainty or mystery. He arranged an experiment with Ossowiecki. At the same hour on a given evening they were to attempt to get into contact. Neither was to mention the matter to anybody till they had met and def-

initely decided whether the experiment had succeeded or not.

A few days after the evening they had arranged Ossowiecki reported to a friend— "At about midnight I put myself into the state in which I find it easiest to leave my body and move about freely in space. I managed, at last, after many efforts, to project myself into the room at Sulejowek. The Marshal was in a chair. I could see how he was trying to concentrate. He had a writing-block in front of him, and on it he had written the words 'The card is on . . .' I tried to read further but failed; the next lines were blurred and indistinct. The effort I made nearly drove me back into my body, so I gave up the attempt for the sake of further contact with the Marshal, and tried instead to concentrate with all my might on a single wish which inwardly I repeated again and again—'Marshal, may you become King of Poland! . . . King of Poland. . . . King of Poland.' I could do no more. I fell back on to the earth plane. Next day I met the Marshal. He said to me: 'Ossowiecki, have you gone mad? So you want me to be King of Poland, do you? I never heard such nonsense in all my life! There! That was what I was writing last night.'—And there, sure enough, was the first line—'The card is on—' "

Up to a point Pilsudski was aware of the extent and exceptional character of his power over human beings. He knew that they loved or hated him and could never remain indifferent. He seemed, in either case, to obsess them. Their love for him would shrink before no sacrifice; he could take their lives in his hands and mould them in any way he pleased. They opposed him in nothing. Adjutants and other officers who came into personal touch

with him worshipped him and were firmly convinced that he was not as other men, but possessed supernatural powers. In earlier days he had been described as "hypnotic"; later the word used was "daimonism." He could spur on devoted subordinates to acts which seemed far beyond their strength and of which they had never before been capable. But just as in men whose natural element was battle, who needed only daring leadership and delighted to let him lead them, he could reveal the most hidden virtues and bring the best within them to the surface, so too, he would lay on others who obeyed less heroic laws and whose nature was the opposite of his own, a dark spell of hostility. The strength of his personality, the halo with which legend had invested him, made it possible for him to draw a number of destinies within the tragic circle of his own.

The black cloud of his own fate lay heavy on all those who surrounded him. When he came into a room his adjutants would feel honoured and pleased. But all spontaneity had deserted them. Even when he joked and told them stories or laughed and made them join in his laughter, their merriment was always a little anxious—a little constrained. A strange, tragic atmosphere seemed to have come into the room with the Marshal, something that had not been there before. The will and personality of their chief seemed to have put a spell on their own thoughts and feelings, a spell at once enthralling and uncanny. They could sacrifice everything, could forget their mothers or their wives, their daughters or their sweethearts, in his service, as though he could have replaced them all. Yet not one of them was Pilsudski's real friend. His earliest comrades, even, were not his friends. He took no advice

and shared no secrets; no one was ever completely in his confidence.

The charmed air through which he moved—this circle into which no living being had broken—not only intensified the devout admiration of inferiors, it made them ready for endless sacrifice on his behalf and immeasurably increased his hold on them.

Sometimes he laughed when people repeated stories of his "daimonism"—but usually he, too, believed in the unknown "daimon" who spoke through him.

On rare occasions he would cower before it. And then his terror was infinite.

CHAPTER III

MARCIA SULLA VARSAVIA

I

THESE days of banishment were bound to come to an end. Three years were too long to be idle, and Pilsudski did not feel old enough to let rest and preparation become retirement. Three years in Sulejowek had whetted his appetite for work. They had also showed him a way.

There were many reasons which urged a return to active politics and the hazards of new battle. Above all, the army. For Pilsudski it was the work of his hands, something for which he was answerable to the nation. General Sikorski, the new Minister for War, had laid a Bill before the Sejm for re-grading the highest military posts. It was contrary to Pilsudski's ideas and aroused his immediate opposition. Moreover, it placed on the retired list a number of officers who were known as enthusiastic Pilsudski-ites.

In the early May of 1926 the President asked Witos, the leader of the Peasants' party, to form a government. Witos allied himself with the Right wing, Pilsudski's opponents.

Pilsudski was not accustomed to having his opinions ignored in important military decisions. The new Premier disregarded him deliberately, and appointed as Minister for War a general who—it was well known—intended to apply an anti-Pilsudski policy to the army. The danger

increased of political strife in the ranks. Pilsudski saw demoralization ahead. That in itself was enough for acting against the Witos government. He felt justified in abandoning his reserve.

And, moreover, the country itself seemed crying out for energetic reform and measures of improvement. The economic position was worse than ever. Polish currency, which had been stabilized a few years previously, had begun once more to fall. The horrors of post-war inflation were still fresh in the public mind: it looked as though a new inflation were threatening. People had begun to take alarm.

Most blame attached to the Sejm. Apocryphal rumours spread of the worst parliamentary corruption. It had become known that several ministers had been very profitably connected with private business deals. It was generally believed that the whole new state was corrupt. Pilsudski listened to these rumours of the moral depravity of his enemies.

And another problem, Pilsudski felt, was still unsolved —the problem of the Sejm and parliamentary government in Poland. The Polish constitution had been modelled on the very progressive French constitution of 1875. But it was even more democratic, more liberal, than its French original. It took no account of the country's immediate past, but treated alike the three divisions of Poland, which, till recently, had been under three different governments. Yet it was necessary to administer three units, which, politically, economically, even culturally, differed profoundly. Only great political wisdom, strong democratic government, a ripe and seasoned parliamentary method, could make this constitution succeed. Parliament was still too weak, too unsure of itself, in Poland. Parties were

concerned with Cabinet appointments, portfolios, and remunerative posts. Yet parties held the real executive power; and the Sejm for Pilsudski was a prototype for all crude and undisciplined party government. Its methods threatened to undermine democracy and misuse the entire constitution, though it had not the energy to follow any positive course. He had always been keenly aware of the excessive power of the Sejm; the weakness, by comparison, of the President. If the state were to be healed, the constitution would have to be reformed, and Pilsudski felt that he must do it. Above all it was necessary to extend the rights of the President: the line of demarcation between executive and legislative must be made more definite. The rights of the Sejm must be curtailed; the Cabinet given greater freedom.

Witos, no doubt, had been appointed legally. But the Parliament that named him had long since ceased to represent the real will or power of the electorate. An appeal from the ex-Chief of State for reconstitution and moral cleansing would be sure to find so many popular echoes that a little illegality might be winked at.

On May 11th a Warsaw newspaper published a long interview with Pilsudski. He attacked the government, accusing them openly, and in the strongest terms, of corruption.

"These gentlemen need not imagine that their methods have been ignored. It is an open secret that they have bribed with government funds, which they used for purposes of espionage on enemies within and without the Sejm. I intend to continue this struggle. I intend to fight undisciplined parties who follow their own selfish ends and ignore the interests of their country. . . ."

The government suppressed the edition. That day a

government newspaper threatened the Marshal with a trial for high treason.

The capital knew that a great political conflict was engaged. Pilsudski's adherents felt that their hour had come. The streets began to take up the cry. Bands of young men marched through Warsaw singing the legion songs. In the evening they crowded into cafés whose patrons they forced to stand to attention, bare their heads and shout "Long live Pilsudski." Excited groups stood about in the streets till early morning; the city was filled with contradictory rumours. Pilsudski was to be arrested. Danger was in the air.

That night a rumour spread through Warsaw that shots had been fired in the neighbourhood of Pilsudski's villa in Sulejowek. Nobody knew who had fired them or from which direction they had come. Troops stationed in Rembertow, in the neighbourhood, learnt that "Dziadek's" house had been fired on.

Zeligowski, the ex-Minister for War, had ordered military games near Rembertow in the second week in May. At the last minute the new government cancelled the order.

But many troops were already in Rembertow, and most of them were Pilsudski's adherents. They heard about the shooting; decided to defend him and sent him their delegates.

Rumours, meanwhile, had reached Pilsudski that the government intended his arrest. Everything pointed to an issue. This electric atmosphere was exactly what he needed.

His mind was made up. Witos must resign—and at once; there must be a new government which must respect the wishes of the people; he must reorganize this

leaderless democracy, direct its strength down proper channels. A hundred and one abuses all cried aloud for reform. The country asked for cleansing and reconstruction; she should have them.

His life had been one long sacrifice for Poland; he had never tried to benefit himself; was entirely single-minded in identifying himself with his country; personal well-being meant nothing to him. He knew the immense distance which separated his own civic honour from the selfish manœuvrings of opponents. He stood at the head of a movement which he intended should regenerate the State, and felt himself entirely justified.

He felt he had the army at his back, and this made his decision all the easier. The army would rally round him at once. He was convinced that the President would submit and force the government's resignation. He had visions of entering Warsaw, a liberator at the head of his men, could hear the shouts which would be ringing, within a few hours, in his ears. The stars were peculiarly auspicious. It was near the eve of the 13th.

Pilsudski drove in an open carriage from Sulejowek into Warsaw in the afternoon of May 12th. Twelve Uhlans composed his body-guard; cavalry and an infantry regiment followed. He wore gala uniform; he must enter his capital in state.

It was nearly four when the cavalcade reached the Praga suburb, divided from Warsaw by the river. A detachment of officers from regiments stationed in Warsaw received Pilsudski at the bridge-head; they were waiting to help as they had promised.

A police squad set to guard the bridges had never expected such an escort; they had abandoned their posts

on both main bridges which led across the river into the city. Pilsudski's men at once took possession.

The Cabinet and the President Wojciechowski had got wind of events that morning. They knew that several regiments had gone over to the ex-Chief of State. At midday they published a proclamation against him, which urged the nation to be calm. Faithful regiments were lined along the Warsaw bank of the Vistula; artillery from the Military Academy, a few machine guns. Praga was cut off from Warsaw. Government troops and Pilsudski-ites came face to face on opposite banks.

The President's position was very difficult. He foresaw contingencies which could only fill him with alarm. Though he liked and had always admired Pilsudski he stood for the law of the land, was the highest representative of his country. Wojciechowski was profoundly religious. High office for him meant far more than the power built by hands. He reverenced the constitution. Once legally formed, a government was a thing inviolate; all armed resistance sacrilege. He could not for an instant forget that he, as the law's chief representative, was bound to sacrifice personal feeling, and he feared that Pilsudski would be rash enough to attack the constitution and attempt to nullify the people's will. He shuddered at the thought of bloodshed through the action of an old friend. His every instinct urged him to avoid a conflict which should lead to the use of troops. While there was time Pilsudski must be persuaded to retire. Wojciechowski decided to go in person and urge the Marshal to turn back.

But he knew how difficult it would be to persuade the unbending, headstrong Ziuk. Still he must try! He knew that in his heart of hearts Ziuk shared his horror of killing; no innocent blood must be spilt.

From the Praga bank Pilsudski watched the government's preparations. He saw regiments being marched into position; machine-gun emplacements set up. Little by little the motley colours of the civilian crowd were swallowed by the dull green of uniforms.

But the sight did not alarm him. Such displays were a move on the government chess-board; a move any government must make.

And he was certain of victory. The President was his old friend. Twenty years ago they had printed "The Worker" together, had grown up together through the struggle for Polish independence. And Wojciechowski had always liked him. Witos, no doubt, had got the better of the President, had probably egged him on to all this fuss. But Pilsudski felt certain that once they met he would be able to win Wojciechowski and break all further opposition. Pilsudski had spells which the other could never manage to resist; he had decided to use them all. He had no doubt whatever that the President would soon be his man.

Soon after four word came that the President's car had reached the Warsaw bank at the opposite end of the Poniatowski bridge. The Marshal at once despatched an officer who returned with a letter from the President inviting Pilsudski to cross and talk things over. So everything was going his way. Pilsudski, though stern, was in high feather. He would not keep the President waiting.

Across the river the capital stretched to the horizon: the convoluted towers of baroque churches, the ornate rococo palaces of the nobles: the indolent river flowing away into the distance, whose embankment seemed the heaped-up treasure of waters. There was the Cathedral of

St. Jan. There, in a strong and delicate curve, the wide-moated castle of Polish kings lifted its tower against the sky: there stood the Siegmund column, its loaded capital bearing the tiny figure of a prince, a slender crucifix supporting him, who bowed majestically to the city spread around his feet.

Pilsudski saw this ancient city, which within the hour would have submitted. It had been high time to exchange the narrow life in Sulejowek for this freer Warsaw air. His post was here with the government in the Belvedere; here where beat the heart of the army.—He crossed the bridge into Warsaw.

Its splendid viaduct ran on for over a while, deserted in the afternoon light. Even the meagre banks, sparsely treed, their sand, their heaps of pebbles, glittered. Young leaves danced green and sappy on strong shoots. Every brick and crevice, the most ancient and crumbling wall, was drenched in gold. The city lay in a still, clear, holiday peace. The very slums which came into sight across the bridge, with their cheap loam, their mottled roofs, the grey squalor of their cracked and peeling house-fronts—clear signs of a shattered world—were bright with living colour. They seemed the necessary foundations of the city which rose in enticing opulence above them.

Pilsudski knew that in the next few days he must take many responsible decisions. Yet his step was jaunty as he neared the grey towers at the Warsaw end of the bridge. He was dressed in his grey-blue Marshal's uniform, a cascade of white tassel across his right shoulder; the order "Virtuti Militari" was fastened to the left side of his tunic —the highest military decoration which the Polish State can bestow.

And in contrast to his splendid uniform he wore on

his head the flat, plain maciejowka, the first képi of his legions, which he alone, in all the army, had not exchanged for the new regulation forage cap.

Behind him his most trusted officers.

The President's car waited on the opposite bank. Regiments beyond with fixed bayonets: machine guns trained across the river.

Which regiments had dared? For an instant the Marshal gave his attention—the Cadets! That set of unlicked cubs! No tradition, no experience! What should they know about war? Or legions? Or what the Polish army stood for!

There stood Wojciechowski. How old he looked! His little beard seemed very white. And how yellow and shrivelled about the gills; how the pouches sagged beneath his eyes! Frock-coated and full of gloom! Good old Wojciechowski! He seemed depressed! And to think we printed "The Worker" together—it might be yesterday.—So now he's the President!—Suits him too.—He always was as honest as the day.—And the best-dressed man in the party. Didn't we always call him "the dandy"?—"The dandy," of course! He was so smart, though he always was as poor as a church mouse. And he managed, somehow or other, to get into the best Russian society, the sort where you could pick up some damned interesting bits of information. We poor devils could never have so much as got our noses in. . . .

Stanislaw Wojciechowski!—let me see! How long is it we've known each other now? Forty years at least! How time does fly! And yet here we are, meeting with all this ceremony—

Stas. had always been a decent sort—a bit weak, perhaps, but decent—you couldn't get away from it. He'd

stick to you.—Anyway, you could always talk him over.—

Pilsudski reached the President. He advanced with a charming smile and offered the wizened man who stood there without a movement his hand.

He was going to be very civil indeed. They'd been friends for more than forty years. Probably Stas. was suffering in the temper. No doubt he'd far rather be sitting at home among his law papers or reading some decent book, than standing out here on this bridge, with machine guns and barbed wire all round him. Good Lord!—even barbed wire. They seem to be very high and mighty! Cadets, eh? Silly young asses—easy enough to bring those chaps to heel.

But the President seemed not to notice the outstretched hand.

Bad as that, eh?

"Marshal, you're taking a great responsibility. The Republic intends to defend its constitution; it has no intention of giving way to rebels. I must ask you, please, to order your troops to retire."

Stas. on his high horse!—all responsibility and dignity. When he stands there and talks like that you'd know he was a president only to look at him.

So far Pilsudski had not spoken. Now he felt it was time to use the note which Wojciechowski remembered as Ziuk's. He tried to hypnotize the President; he half-smiled, his voice was warm and full of friendship.

"My dear President, all this is very simple. Let your Witos government resign and I retire."

"Impossible. The government was legally elected."

Pilsudski began to pay attention.—Was the old fellow going to cut up rough? Didn't want to discuss, eh?—forgotten that we're old friends.

The half smile died in the shadow of his drooping moustache.

"Then I shall take Warsaw and force the government's retirement."

Wojciechowski went half a shade yellower: his voice sounded harsh.—"Think what you're doing. You're setting yourself up against the constitution."

You and your constitution! This opposition—why, it's unheard of! How dare this Wojciechowski—this feeble little rat of a politician, stand up and contradict me?—Who put him where he is—on his throne.

Pilsudski flushed.—Unheard of!

"You forget, Mr. President, that I'm the first Marshal of Poland. I shall act as I choose—"

How do you like that, you old fool? You'll soon be made to climb down—you and your pack of government scoundrels. Pretty sort of government!

Tiny sweat-drops stood on Wojciechowski's forehead. His yellow face was now dead white: a lump had stuck in his throat. He sobbed before he could speak; his voice came out harsh and broken, scarcely able to form its words.

"We shall prevent you. We shall force you to submit. I, the President of this Republic, elected by the people, warn you."—Wojciechowski seems to be rather on his high horse. He certainly looks very worthy—dignified, almost. But how old he is! How his hands shake! How dare that shabby old fool stand in my way and croak at me? What's it all for? For Witos—an ordinary, long-booted peasant—and a government of pimps and rascals.

The Marshal's blood was up.—Rascals—nothing but rascals! This thought drove out every other. So they sent out regiments against him,—did they?—regiments who'd

never have existed unless he'd been there to lick them into shape. Troops he's had to teach to stand to attention. Fellows who couldn't use a rifle. Swindlers! Sharpers! Rabble!

Pilsudski's thick eyebrows closed in one great line. The furrows stood out on his forehead. He took no more notice of the President, but rounded on the nearest private. His voice was edged, it cut the young soldier like a whip.

"Are you going to fire on Poland's First Marshal?"

The boy trembled. Dziadek—the Marshal— Oh, miracle of the river. Pilsudski! Pilsudski!

The blood went out of his cheeks. He dropped his eyes without a word.

"Very well, there's nothing more to be said." Pilsudski turned from the President. "Right about." Back across the bridge with all his officers at his heels. From behind him came the whirring of a car: the sound died out in the distance.

The Poniatowski bridge stretched empty and idle as before. Still bathed in light; but the shadow which crossed back on Pilsudski's right was longer than it had been on his left, as it stepped so jauntily along by the side of a friendly general.

The city held its breath. A shot rattled through the silence.

Rifle fire. A state of siege.

Government troops advanced from the centre of the town to hold the Warsaw bridge heads. They were too late: Pilsudski's men were there before them, and fought their way on to Castle Square.

Machine guns. Civil war.

The government forces were weak:—an infantry regiment quartered in the Citadel; six hundred men in the Military Academy; artillery, a flying squad. It would take

another twenty-four hours to bring reinforcements into Warsaw.

Witos the Premier was holding an emergency meeting in the Prime Minister's palace near Castle Square. It dispersed at the first sound of firing, and hurried in cars to the Belvedere, where the President was waiting.

By the evening of the 12th Pilsudski's troops were holding the centre of the town. They had taken the garrison headquarters, into which Pilsudski moved and from where he directed operations. On every side a crackle of rifle fire; from time to time the rattle of machine guns.

Deputies were gathered in the Sejm. Nobody knew what would happen. The left stood for Pilsudski; the right demanded protection of government by law established. It was impossible to communicate with the Cabinet —no Prime Minister, no President, no Ministers for War or the Interior: not a single responsible leader. The only elected authority who for the moment could preside over parties was Rataj, the Speaker of the Sejm.

Shortly before ten Rataj was summoned to the Belvedere and commissioned to negotiate with Pilsudski. He went at once to garrison headquarters. The square before them could scarcely be recognized. It was a camp which stretched from Pilsudski's quarters to the rococo palace of the Foreign Office, whose ornate façade seemed now grotesquely out of place. Where once, with all the loaded pomp of a jewelled Eastern lady, the gigantic Orthodox Cathedral had raised its gilded cupolas and turrets, there was one bleak, empty space. The cathedral was being demolished. The square lay open to the sky of spring, mottled no longer with the shadows of innumerable Byzantine domes. On the bare earth rifles by the hundred had been stacked: between the stacks lay soldiers as

though they had taken the field against the Russians.

Knots of people jostled on the steps of Garrison Headquarters. A noisy coming and going; officers rushing to and fro; soldiers who blocked each other's way. Each knew exactly what would happen, each had a fresh piece of news and felt he was the centre of it all. In the doorway itself were messenger-boys and stretcher-bearers, and several deputies, who considered this safer than the Sejm. There was the clamorous representative of a press bureau, whose editor thirsted for news; the Secretary of his country's legation did his best in strident and very finicky French, to assert the rights of his compatriot. No one in all this din appeared to know that not far off there were corpses strewn about the pavements. Nothing indicated that morale and honour were at odds with law and democracy. The discipline and strength of the man in whose name this battle was being fought and who sat one storey above the street, were not conspicuous.

Rataj was conducted to Pilsudski. The Marshal's quarters were in one of the great main rooms of the building. Outside the tall windows it grew dark. Pilsudski wore his general's uniform. His face had a grey tinge; he had not expected that May 12th would begin a civil war. But he refused to negotiate. This was not a personal matter; it concerned the honour of the army, the honour of the Polish Republic. The government knew his terms.

At about midnight he consented to receive some journalists.

"I can't say very much. I am exhausted, spiritually and physically. After a long struggle with myself I have been forced to a struggle in the open."

His face convinced the journalists. He had not foreseen the corpses that would strew his path to reform.

Rataj returned to the Belvedere. The streets which led to it were held by government troops. The same gaping crowds as had jostled in the centre of the town, the great main court presented a similar picture. Stacked rifles, barbed wire, a few machine guns, lorries with munitions and soldiers' packs; excited officers, staring loiterers who had managed to gain admission. A hundred shadows passed to and fro along the white façade of the palace.

Within there was a splendid fighting spirit. Nobody thought for an instant of letting the "rebel" have his way. The government had sent out a wireless message intended for the rest of the world. "M. Pilsudski in rebellion. We stand for law and justice. This shameless act of treason will be a warning to all future generations. Pilsudski far more dangerous to his country than any foreign enemy could ever be."

Witos was ready to fight. So were ministers and government generals. Rataj hoped for concessions from the President.

The Speaker knew Wojciechowski was no power seeker; that he was inclined, as Witos had learnt, to make further attempts to negotiate. But the Prime Minister was determined to prevent all concessions. Rataj was forbidden to see the President, who remained in his study, alone.

So Rataj turned back with nothing done. In the Seim there was an all-night sitting.

Pilsudski's troops in the meantime had taken nearly the whole of Warsaw. From the bridge-heads they had fought their way down the length of the great main boulevard which led southwards to the Officers' Academy, the military bulwark of the government. This building was the last outpost of the Belvedere, which lay, in its shelter, close behind it.

On the 15th the Marshal was reinforced. All over the country regiments put themselves at his orders. Troops came from Vilna in the night. Pilsudski himself went to the station to welcome them. Regiments from all over Poland sent word that they were ready when he wanted them. Lodz and Cracow, the two largest towns in Poland, were in the hands of regiments that had declared for him. His chances of victory increased from hour to hour; from hour to hour the government's defeat became more certain. The civilian population began to take a share in events. Armed members of socialist organizations and rifle clubs came out into the streets to fight the government. The Socialist party who, "in spite of everything," still saw Pilsudski as their founder, the enemy of the Right and National Democrats, joined him to end the government's power. Their council met and decided to be active on his side. A general strike was called. No trains but troop trains were to be run, and they should move Pilsudski regiments into Warsaw. He was the idol of both soldiers and workers, a popular symbol of the real liberties of his country. His name, for the time being, was enough to sink all differences.

There was no longer any doubt that he would win. But machine guns still clattered in the streets and the air still hummed with bullets. They found their way among civilians. For Warsaw's inhabitants this blood-letting had ceased to be a political controversy which had taken a military turn. It had become a spectacle, the kind of sensation dear to crowds. It was something new, a break in the last two years' monotony when people had to be content with wordy newspaper polemics instead of the real thing.

It had become as exciting as a film. Crowds drifted through the streets to watch the fighting as though it were

a military tournament. And now and then a bullet picked its man. Somebody would crumple together; there would be a pool of blood in the gutter; the curious would scatter, to re-form, in a few minutes, somewhere else. At times these staring crowds would stand in the firing line directly behind the troops posted from pavement to pavement. Sand-bags, demolished hoardings, packing-cases had been hurriedly stacked; paving-stones wrenched up and piled. The troops lay behind entrenched; they would retire a hundred yards after a skirmish and throw up a new barricade.

The sun smiled gaily down on the battle. Light sparkled along the broken surface of barricades, caressing the street, the fighting troops. The young and shining earth in this holiday season of Whitsuntide and new life was soft with the breath of spring. Black branches, stripped of their leaves, the splintered trunks of riddled trees, stood bare in the warm May sunshine. Down the wide boulevard on which the main action was being fought machine guns had lopped down the great top branches, which lay there, green and friendly, on the pavements. Torn from the bushes and trees, buds and petals, in this chaos of splintered boards, heaped earth, cracked paving-stones, empty cartridge-cases, lay strewn, clear rose and gold. The sharp sweetness of young acacia, the heavy scent of lilac and laburnum, mingled with the hot sweat of fighting troops, with dust, and corrosive smoke.

On the afternoon of the 14th, at the end of a bitter struggle, Pilsudski's regiments took the Academy.

The way to the Belvedere lay open.

Wojciechowski was alone in his private room; he had stayed apart from other ministers. Despair had seized him

after his fruitless interview with Pilsudski. He had striven for more than forty years to be faithful to the teachings of socialism; had tried to make a stand against militarism, against bloodshed within the borders of his country. For more than forty years he had striven for Polish unity, had sacrificed and devoted every gift, his knowledge, his whole life, to lead his countrymen forth from an unlawful despotism into true democracy and law.

Now he had to stand by and watch Poles shoot each other down; see every law of constitutional government and right, trodden underfoot as though such things were utterly worthless.

And Ziuk had done it all. The Pilsudski he admired and loved could not come to terms with Polish freedom; he had demanded an act which would have shattered the constitution—he had demanded the impossible.

The old man felt too weak to make plans. He had made a few attempts to stop this bloodshed and open fresh negotiations. But his attempts had been wrecked by the Premier, who refused to give way and wanted to fight to the end. Hopelessness had descended on him. Everything in him was wounded and put to shame. Each shot, as it rattled in the street, pierced him as though he had been hit by it. Ought he to have been less obstinate—consented to waive the law? He could not tell, he could see nothing. Friends, many years ago, had often warned him of Pilsudski. He was a man who could cast spells, enchant, spread fatal nets in which even the most innocent got entangled. He had laughed. He knew Ziuk better than that. He had known what nonsense it all was, this talk of his hypnotic influence. But now he felt some alien fate that shackled him. His faith in law, in the state, in men, was

broken. But these, even,—law and the state, the most guiltless of all these corpses—were as nothing and might be forgiven: all but his faith in God's power. That faith was shaken: his strength, his last refuge had deserted him. God had turned away His face.

Wojciechowski had gone on hoping even after the first blood shed; he had hoped when no way out seemed possible. He had felt that God would grant him, the earthly representative of His law, some aid against his lawless enemy. God would reveal Himself in a miracle. Had not God heard the oath which he took in the sight of the people, and thus become one with him in his office? An insult to this office seemed an insult, almost, to God. Yet men's ambitions had set these laws aside. The President saw with horror how lightly the sanctity of consecrated symbols could be spurned. He clasped his hands and knelt in a corner of the room. He began to pray for help and light; tears glistened on his cheeks. He had wanted to vest himself in his office as a priest is vested in a stole, but the sacred power he venerated had fallen to dust in his hands.

Outside the windows the crackling rifle-fire increased. The shots came nearer. He supposed the Academy was taken. The corpses. . . . The tears!

He hid his thin face in powerless hands.

2

In the great dining-room ministers and generals were at lunch. Provisions had begun to dwindle. The Cabinet had to make the best of ham, a few sausages, a plate or two of cheese. Their fighting spirit had not increased in the course of these three days at the Belvedere. The last hours, especially, in spite of much hurry and excitement, had seemed unusually long. They had had no sleep except for

an hour here and there. Law and the State seemed less imposing with every minute that passed. A questioning, rather wavering, mood had begun to take the place of martial threats, a mood of mutual interrogation which at times verged on unconcealed surrender. Slabs of bread and cheese, tea brewed disconcertingly strong, did little to increase the will to victory. Something, the Ministers felt, was bound to happen. They quietly hoped it would happen soon. Then they would be able to get some sleep.

An officer of the President's body-guard came with news that the Academy was taken. It seemed likely that the enemy would advance into the courtyard of the Belvedere. Resistance appeared to be useless; they were too overwhelmingly outnumbered.

Fatigue had vanished in a trice. An excited scramble began. It would be too undignified to be taken prisoner by "these rebels." A way lay open—through the park, then out through back streets which, God be praised, were still loyal. The Ministers rushed through the back entrance of the Belvedere, through gardens which wasted, unshared, the heavy scent of their lilac bushes. The paths lay warm beneath May sunshine. At the outer gate was the statue of Jan Sobieski, the great Polish king, riding to victory over the body of a Tartar. Shadows of ancient branches patterned the white stone king, the sky was deep and serene, but shielding the fugitives with hand-grenades, ready to hurl at the first encounter with the enemy, came the President's body-guard with his standard.

Their way south of the city was clear. Without obstruction the Ministers reached King Sobieski's summer palace at Wilanow, near Warsaw. Here government, President and loyal generals remained. Witos himself could see by now that further resistance would be useless. Pilsudski had

possession of Warsaw; a general strike had been called. Trains had stopped running; they could hope for no reinforcements. They were in Pilsudski's hands for good or ill.

Wojciechowski thought only of one thing—a speedy end to bloodshed. He sent his confessor and adjutant into Warsaw with orders to find the Speaker of the Sejm and bring him without delay to Wilanow.

Rataj reached Wilanow at about ten o'clock that night. He had hoped secretly the loyalists would win, though he had no special liking for the present Prime Minister and government. Still the country needed law and order. He himself was at the head of Parliament, the body which stood for Polish democracy. This Sejm had been elected by a process of established law. He could see no constitutional ground for opposing it.

A Pilsudski victory would mean the triumph of unlawful forces, the forces of personal ambition over the people and the Sejm their representative. Moreover, Rataj, a peasant's son, was himself ambitious, and aimed high. He was tall and alert, with eyes that could by turn seem shrewd or melancholy. In certain circumstances a personality as great as Pilsudski's—the acknowledged hero of a nation—might get in Rataj's way. He had every reason for opposing the Marshal as the enemy of constitutional law, and insisting on the government's legal status. The Ministers were helpless; they were giving way before brute force; they should affirm their rights to the last.

Rataj felt that in spite of this defeat he must persuade the President not to waver. Ministers must surrender on terms. Stipulation might be worthless *de facto*,—in law they would carry weight enough; the forms, at least, of law must be preserved.

But when Rataj arrived at Wilanow he saw at once that things had changed. Hopeless depression was in the air. He felt the worst, and hurriedly tried to convince the government that they must make at least a show of protest. But the President handed him three documents, on ordinary note-paper in pen and ink. One was a record of the last Cabinet meeting. The brief contents of the second read as follows: "To His Excellency the President of the Republic.—I herewith announce the resignation of the whole Government.—Wincenty Witos—14th May 1926. Wilanow." The third, addressed to him as Speaker, contained the President's resignation.

Rataj was furious. He had hoped that *pro forma,* in any case, this régime would affirm its rights. But here, in black and white, was submission.

And he, who by the Polish constitution had the rank of a Deputy President, had been ordered to legalize these documents and offer them as booty and tribute to the man who had caused all this wrong!

The Speaker's first impulse was to decline: he would refuse to belittle his office by an act which turned wrong into right. The position was inconceivable. He had always been a man of law, a man who had never tried to gratify his dearest ambition by other than established methods. Now he was in an atmosphere of lawlessness from which there seemed no escape.

But he was too alert not to be fully sensitive to this crisis and all it implied. He had done his best to keep level-headed, examine the situation, and not give way to the hysteria which had shaken so many other chief protagonists in the events of the last few days. He strove to see the position as a whole, ignore his feelings, act only on the bare facts. It was difficult, but he was not a sentimentalist, he

was young and had many objectives. This present path would have to be trodden to the end. Pilsudski had won. It would have been senseless to attempt to deny it. He decided to obey the President, and bring Pilsudski the government's decision. Only when he was sitting in his car did he notice how exhausted he was. He had had no sleep for three nights.

The Deputy President reached garrison headquarters late that night. There were still machine guns. Rifle stacks still littered the square. On the steps to the first floor the same people still seemed to be jostling, the same officers who forty-eight hours ago had elbowed their way in and out.

But they looked different; their legs and arms seemed weighted; they dragged themselves up and down, heavy-eyed. A general climbed the stairs in front of Rataj; he swayed on every step as though he were drunk. A passing officer gave his superior his arm and helped him to get to the top.

Rataj noticed the general's face; it was a chalky grey, his chin was stubbled. It took Rataj some time to recognize an old acquaintance. Then he noticed the chins of other officers, heavy with a three days' growth. They were unwashed, uncombed, ruffianly; their tunics crumpled and unbrushed, collars torn apart, their faces streaked with sweat and grime. He felt his chin. Three days ago he seemed to remember having shaved. When had he had his last square meal?—Washed? Had his clothes off? Slept—when had he slept?

Right had ceased to struggle with disorder; it was no question of principle or ambition. This was a battle of staying power—which nerves could bear the tension longest?

Pilsudski had won; it was inevitable—the man whose will had never bent, whose nerve had never snapped.

Rataj entered the great room on the first floor. Pilsudski sat there full of confidence. In this building of exhausted people he alone was perfectly cool. There was no trace now of the surprised, somewhat shaken Pilsudski of three evenings ago. And the Witos government? In the Belvedere, as Pilsudski grew surer of himself, their courage had ebbed from hour to hour. Now the game was his and he knew it. But his face looked haggard and very stern. A thousand wounded and almost four hundred dead had been picked up in the streets within three days.

And each hour fresh news came in of calamities in the ranks of the army. Stories of unnerved, remorseful officers, for whom Pilsudski felt responsible—cases which spoke more clearly all the tragedy of the last three days than casualty lists or hospital reports. On the very first night Pilsudski had heard of a death of which he found it hard to rid his mind; he could feel the horror of the hours which had led up to it.

A young officer, one of his most devoted adherents, was a lieutenant in the first regiment which had been ordered out against Pilsudski. He had been told off to lead a detachment and make a stand against the Marshal's troops, and he had taken their first bullets.

From Lublin came news of the suicide of a young colonel, who had received Pilsudski's order to bring his regiment to Warsaw. His general sympathized with Pilsudski but felt bound by his government oath, and refused to allow the men to march. The colonel in an agony of conflict had put a bullet through his brain.

Finally there was Sosnkowski, one of his eldest friends and comrades; his Chief of Staff, his fellow-worker in the

Legions, his companion in the Magdeburg fortress. Pilsudski loved Sosnkowski; they were bound by many common memories. He loved his humour, his enthusiasm. Sosnkowski had tried to shoot himself through the heart. He had been ordered to lead his men against the Marshal. His simplicity had proved unequal to the conflict; he had seen no other way out: it was doubtful whether he could be saved.

Pilsudski was as much disillusioned as shaken. Sosnkowski had known him better than anybody else. He ought to have come out against the government, he ought to have known that where his chief fought, there would be victory. Had he lost belief in Pilsudski's star? Such news was not easy to bear.

But these struggles of conflicting loyalties, which ended at the point of a revolver, had not been confined to the army. Great masses of the people felt suddenly bereft of guidance. Pilsudski's name, during the years of retirement, had gained such prestige that even the middle classes, who had once been ill-disposed and mistrustful, had looked to him for leadership and protection. Their trust had become profound. Widespread rumours of government corruption had made people long for a new leader, a determined and honourable man. The middle class had reckoned on Pilsudski, and had given him their support in advance if ever he should decide to return. But they had not been prepared for this step, which had only opposed present corruption with a further act of illegality. They were undecided whether to support the Marshal or abandon all hopes of reform.

But the streets acclaimed Pilsudski, the streets were tired of elections, of party conflict and confusion. They wanted a new sensation; fresh policies. Pilsudski was the one man

in Poland to whom they could look for such a course. His name spelt revolt; it excited.

On May 15th, in the early morning, Pilsudski went to the Sejm to open negotiations with Rataj. He had at his back a vast majority, the army, the whole of the workmen. But issues were still confused. There was no existing president, no government: the Sejm was helpless, no one knew Pilsudski's intentions.

He had all that he could possibly need; the country was for him, the stubborn president had resigned; in the Sejm the opposition had lost heart. No victory could have been more overwhelming.

But great as it was, the price to be paid was greater. Pilsudski was appalled by the visible signs of his action—the endless funeral processions; this stir which would be heard all round the world. His heart sank. He had hoped to win by force of personality and set about reforms forthwith. Instead, he had made a civil war with entrenchments and heaps of dead. His soldiers, whose regiments he had built up, the first free Polish army, whose idol and marshal he was, had shot one another down. The country and his supporters expected him to seize dictatorship. He had only to stretch forth his hand to take supremacy—absolute power. But he abstained.

Though he had fought them for years, in his heart he reverenced Sejm and constitution. A dictatorship would have been the end of both. Pilsudski felt he had not the courage to destroy a possession of his countrymen to which more than a century had aspired. And he did not dare accept a gift of power if to reach it he must step over corpses.

Friends advised him to form his own party. A Pilsudski

party would have on its side for the time being a vast majority in the country. It would make possible, for many years ahead, an autonomous, independent and at the same time democratic régime. But Pilsudski had no liking for parties: he had always carried out his own measures; he preferred even now to be unhampered by party intrigue. A party of his own would merely have meant official dictatorship on the pattern of other western and eastern powers. His situation and Poland's seemed things apart, incomparable with other governments or leaders. Though he had no wish to lead a party and sacrifice his national prestige, he refused to be a dictator like any other.

He wanted most of all to legalize his coup d'état. Till the sanction of law should be restored he felt restless and unsure of his ground.

A weight would be lifted from his mind by the election of a new president and a new constitutional régime; and this weight was a very heavy one. Strong government would be needed for the measures of reform and moral cleansing in whose name he had begun his march on Warsaw.

Negotiations lasted for twelve hours. When they ended the new government had been formed. Professor Bartel, of the Lemberg University, a devoted adherent of Pilsudski's, became Prime Minister. The Cabinet were all Pilsudski-ites. The Marshal himself, for the time being, was content with the Ministry for War. His chief objective was army reorganization and reform. A new president had still to be elected. Pilsudski's name had worked like magic on the people. No other figure could be so popular, so significant, influential, beloved. The country clamoured to have him chosen.

Two weeks after the coup d'état parliament sat to choose its new President. Pilsudski was elected.

His adherents were jubilant. Warsaw acclaimed him vociferously; the army felt it had been honoured. At the head of a corps of officers and sergeants a general marched to the Place Pilsudski. A statue of Prince Josef Poniatowski, Napoleon's Marshal, stands at its centre. The corps lined up; the bronze prince, poised on a fine, curvetting charger, in the dress of a Roman warrior, smiled quietly down.

The general drew his sword.—"Marshal Poniatowski, I must beg respectfully to announce that the people have confided the highest office in the land into the hands of Poland's first Marshal—Marshal Josef Pilsudski."

At such a moment, when their general-in-chief had been made president, soldiers felt they had every right to be grandiloquent.

At mid-day the Premier and the Speaker called on Pilsudski to announce the election result. He knew that the country looked to him and hoped he would accept. And he had known that the votes would be with him.

For many hours he considered. Election by the Sejm would have endorsed, once and for all, his action against the previous government. What more had the people's deputies to offer? He refused the presidency.

He declined in a letter to the Speaker of the Sejm.

"I thank the Sejm for having elected me for the second time. The step I took has both legal and historical sanction. But I cannot live without some work which will give me immediate results. Such work, as the constitution stands, cannot be done by presidents."

Pilsudski would have felt that he had betrayed himself

had he remained content to be a figure-head and sacrificed his real work to the presidency. A president could not superintend the army, work out a reformed constitution, or take part in any struggle with the Sejm. But though, for himself he declined it, he wished the presidency to go to someone on whom he could depend, a man of whom he could feel surer than he had of the last president. He named Moscicki, an old friend of socialist days. This choice was the continuation of his policy begun with Narutowicz and frustrated by the action of the Right. Moscicki was elected next day. He was a peaceable man: like Narutowicz, a distinguished engineer, and though he had been a revolutionary and contributed in London to "Aurore," he was not a politician. He had always admired Pilsudski, and the Marshal had little doubt that he would endorse his ideas.

This presidential oath was taken in a room in the castle, not, like its predecessors, in the Sejm, in full view of the people's representatives. Pilsudski ignored the clamour of parliament. He was Minister for War and nothing further, yet nobody dared oppose him. At the ceremony of the presidential oath he refused to sit among his colleagues; for him there was a special armchair placed in front of the ministerial bench. His official status meant nothing. This president and this government were his work. He had created the entire situation.

The country's prospects had improved. Trade was increasing; the effects, which for years had been hoped and striven for, of various economic measures, began, at last, to be felt. It was as though they had been his work.

An alliance never entered his thoughts, but it suited his purpose to become only a semi-official dictator. He had striven to have the events of May made legal, but this

sanction must take the form that he desired. When, some days after the coup d'état, the Bartel government took its oath and was about to proceed to ratify his act constitutionally—a step for which he longed—he made it plain that he had not the smallest intention of submitting to any legal form unless it fell in with his wishes.

The new Cabinet, led by the Premier, had met in the Speaker's office to take the oath. The Minister for War arrived at last. Rataj handed the Cabinet their printed declaration to sign; this document would inaugurate the régime.

Bartel had taken up his pen, when Pilsudski interrupted proceedings. He turned with a question to Rataj.—"What's this oath like?"

It was the oath prescribed by constitution. He feared it might contain some proviso which would get in the way of his plans. He read it through; thought it over. At last he said—"I don't mind signing that—" and put his name to the deed which gave him constitutional sanction.

But he never opposed the law: he had struggled, as he felt, against laws which others had distorted and nullified. *He* was the true protector of law. And in his mission he believed with a passionate faith which not even the horrors of three days' civil war and the prickings of his conscience could destroy.

CHAPTER IV

THE DICTATOR

In October 1926 the Bartel government was out-voted and the President asked Pilsudski to form a cabinet. It was a chance of uniting the country which he did not feel he could neglect. He had made up his mind that the rancours of the past should be forgotten.

He set himself to the business of government with all the fire and zeal of a young man. Old differences must be made to disappear: he would give an example of civic sense to a disciplined, united democracy.

He formed a Cabinet which included every shade of opinion from the extreme right wing to socialism. More sober reflection after the first excitement of battle had convinced him that he must not neglect the conservative elements in Poland: they included too many people whose influence was permanent and widespread.

The more powerful aristocracy had been unfavourable —at times actively hostile—to Pilsudski, though a few individuals among them had come over openly to his side. He wanted, now, to be backed by the whole nobility, whom he did not intend should be his enemies, and decided to make concessions. His socialist past was remote; he had no intention of looking back to it. In a sense the left still saw in him a leader. He had never either championed or denied them. The May episode might conceivably have ended in disaster if the socialists and workmen had not joined him. Though Pilsudski was aware that there might have been no victory without them, he did not feel

bound by any special gratitude. Realities were what mattered.

And he did not imagine that the approach to the Polish aristocracy would be either very long or very arduous. He could point to his name and genealogy. At times in socialist days he had remembered with satisfaction that he was a noble, as well-born as the greatest Polish families.

Prince Albert Radziwill, the bearer of one of the most ancient and powerful titles in the country, invited him to Nieswiez, his castle on the Russian border, to visit the grave of Prince Stanislaus Radziwill, Pilsudski's favourite adjutant, who had fallen in the Bolshevik war. He accepted and went to Niewiez. The house-party which had been asked to meet him was composed of guests who bore the most historic Polish names—Radziwills, Sapiëhas, Tarnowskis, Tyszkiewiczs, Lubomirskis and Potockis. When, after dinner by candle-light, in the wide and ancient hall, a prince stood up to drink his health, the Prime Minister was made to feel that a secret alliance had been cemented between him and the Polish aristocracy.

He was fêted by the assembled nobles as the chief citizen of Poland, a great patriot and soldier. Prince Eustachy Sapiëha, who in 1920 had conspired to overturn his government, said, before he emptied his glass—

"To-day we have among us a man whose courage is consolidating the state. Marshal, we are all behind you—ready with all our help to make your task a success."

But Prince Radziwill's toast pleased the Marshal best of all. He drank to "Josef Pilsudski, a dear cousin of our family."

But this reconciliation with the nobles and the wave of courage which had swept the country in the days after the

coup d'état were not enough to end dissensions or create any lasting memory. These things had made their effect; but financial depression and the many political complications of a half-formed and still unseasoned republic were not spirited out of existence so easily. The people's devotion, immediately after his coup d'état, had made a deep impression on Pilsudski. This nation, he felt, was still ready for any effort. In times of crisis his instinct was alert and sure. He remembered days of enthusiasm and saw a devoted people ready for every sacrifice.

But he easily forgot how exceptional it all had been; no thoughts of shops and offices had damped or preoccupied these crowds. They could throng the streets, sing national songs, cheer, and respond to every catch-word as loudly as to every expression of real patriotism: their pulses had beaten faster, their emotions had been swept down every current, till at last a reaction had set in, and they had found themselves at the end of it all among the business cares of every day. Pilsudski enthusiasm had ebbed, drudgery had taken its place. The country's position was improving at the time of the coup d'état; this improvement lasted almost two years. It had raised fresh hopes, creating a certain prosperity which began to be felt by all classes and in every department of national life. Pilsudski felt all this to be his work. It was he who had set an example. But little by little trade began once more to decline. Money became tighter than ever. Business men and industrialists had committed themselves too heavily during the prosperous months. A series of business mistakes began to make themselves felt; the depression increased still further and at last became widespread. The passing boom was followed by a period of slump.

Pilsudski, to whom finance was incomprehensible, could

see no connection between all this and the apathy he perceived in his countrymen. When he came into power he had been conscious of a wave of enthusiasm, had felt that this in itself would be enough to bring prosperity to the nation. He saw now that his voice had roused no lasting echoes. He had done what he could. His chagrin was profound. He began to scrutinize his countrymen to discover some hidden reason for the indifference and lack of vision he encountered. There seemed an unbridgeable gulf between his efforts and his people's incapacity to respond. One day he said—"I led our Polish standards to a victory of which even our ancestors never dreamed; and I did it at a time of such universal cowardice that the white eagle had begun to look yellow with fear."

He was thinking of July 1920. He forbade, in an interview, all comparisons between himself and Napoleon. *He* had been guilty of no such tactical errors as those with which the Emperor had been charged. And he blamed his people for the fact that currency had not been stabilized much sooner; was tempted to abandon every effort he was making on "this country's" behalf.

Yet he believed that no one else could govern better.

Though Pilsudski was Prime Minister his status in itself meant nothing: it gave him a legal right to certain powers which, as Minister for War, he could not have exercised.

But he was greater than any Prime Minister; he was the saviour of his country. This fact was never allowed to be forgotten.

This often gave rise to complications, since it produced situations for which there was no precedent. The public had to submit to the fact that Cabinet procedure was at

the mercy of a semi-official autocracy which sometimes would reverse even etiquette. Pilsudski was not the colleague of any Minister. He was the popular idol whose power and influence were out of all proportion to the Cabinet. Ministers were there to see that his ideas were carried out, to supply such expert knowledge as he lacked. In many cases their reasoning might be sounder and more technical; they might disagree with him entirely, but his prestige could overwhelm them all. Besides, contradiction would have been useless.

The country looked on and acquiesced; but new situations arose which could not be dealt with officially. On official occasions, during the years when he was Chief of State, he had been in the habit of attending mass at the Cathedral of St. Jan. He abandoned this custom altogether as soon as he returned to active politics, since in St. Jan his anomalous position could not be recognized. The President's official chair stood near the altar; behind it there were three other seats allotted to the Prime Minister, the Marshals of the Senate, and the Sejm. Pilsudski, unwilling to sit with colleagues and abandon his claim to special honours, preferred not to visit the cathedral.

His position as Prime Minister required that he should take up his quarters in the Prime Minister's palace, which stood in the centre of the town. But as Chief of State he had lived in the Belvedere. He insisted on living there again. He had led his army from the Belvedere, had gone to his front to victory over Russia from the Belvedere; in the Belvedere he intended to remain. Externals did not really affect him; he cared very little how he lived, but his choice of official residence was more than a mere matter of convenience, more, even, than a matter of prestige.

He was superstitious, and the Belvedere touched secret chords. He claimed it, and the President, whose official residence it had been, moved to the dignified and ancient, but partly uninhabitable, Royal Castle. And when, in the autumn of 1918, Pilsudski resigned the premiership, the position remained the same. His official status was simply —Minister for War and Chief Inspector of the Army, but he did not move out of the Belvedere.

At Cabinet sittings he would be the last to arrive, yet it went without saying he should still be considered to head the government. Ministers whose scope and methods had no particular interest for Pilsudski, were expected to govern without him, but subject to the stipulation that in his absence no measure of importance should be taken. Home affairs and foreign policy could interest him as much as the army. In the administration of either, responsible ministers were to make no far-reaching decisions without Pilsudski's consent.

It was not sheer will to power which inspired this semi-official dictatorship. He found time, in a very busy life, to be interested in most branches of legislation.

But his engrained respect for democracy prevented him from taking the last decisive step and becoming an official dictator. He sincerely tried, apart from foreign affairs and certain domestic measures, to give his ministers a free hand. But he failed to notice that several departments had begun to escape his influence. Though he preserved all the appearance of autocracy, some branches of government, in reality, became from day to day more democratic.

As a rule, his few immediate colleagues knew little of his decisions beforehand. Old habits of secrecy had not been broken with the years, and it gave him a kind of

childish pleasure to watch the consternation which unforeseen decisions could produce. At the new elections of the Sejm it was expected that he, as Premier, would announce the party programme of the government. He said nothing for several months. At last he was persuaded to broadcast. An afternoon was fixed on which he was to speak from the Belvedere. All Poland waited. The Prime Minister's announcement would affect the whole political situation. Pilsudski sat with his two little daughters, one on either knee, before the microphone. The country pricked up its ears. But the Premier began telling his children stories—stories of the mare Kasztanka, of the legions who went marching out to war—the most charming and innocent little fairy tales, which did not even end with a moral. Disappointment was general; Pilsudski was highly amused.

Deputations of peasants came to the Belvedere in the weeks which preceded the election. Each district—each village even—wanted "Dziadek" to advise it how to vote. For peasants, no other name—apart from the Madonna and the saints—had a sound quite equal to "Pilsudski." These masses, as a rule quite ignorant, had been used to believe in some supreme and vague authority—a power they could not quite understand, but which seemed the highest power on earth, the power which made things happen as they did. In Russian Poland, before the war, this supreme being had been the Czar. He was the Lord of the earth, his name must be spoken with bated breath. Pilsudski had taken his place and the place of Franz Josef of Austria. Dziadek had worked the miracle of freedom; he had become sole protector of the fatherland. Power, law, wisdom, all meant "Dziadek." The peasant worked and went his daily round; any problem beyond his ex-

perience could be solved with a fatalistic "Dziadek will tell us what to think about it."

For peasants these elections were an event. It seemed so difficult to choose; there was only one man in the country who could give them the right advice. The furthest parishes sent "Dziadek" their deputation. Where they had no money for railways the long journey was done on foot. Peasants for many weeks streamed into Warsaw as though they had come on a pilgrimage to the black holy Mother of God, whose picture, behind its gold curtain, keeps watch over Poland from the monastery of Jasna Gora. They would wait for hours in the courtyard of the Belvedere till Pilsudski's adjutants had received and advised them on his behalf. One day a miracle was vouchsafed them—Pilsudski came out and showed himself!

The huge crowd dared scarcely lift its eyes: this figure had stepped out suddenly through a doorway—Pilsudski moustached and uniformed—just as he looked on picture postcards and the photographs on the walls at home.—"So you want to know who to vote for? Well, just you let me tell you. Now, listen, everybody!—You vote for the one you like best."

The door shut. Dziadek had vanished.

He had never cared for the cheap applause of crowds, not even of crowds of his own peasants. But he loved to bewilder. Later he laughed very heartily when his adjutants described the peasants' astonishment. But the adjutants had received them and given them the advice they wanted.

In politics he still worked on without any definite method; he refused to confine himself to his duties as Minister for War. He would deal remorselessly with any opposition he encountered, with anyone suspected of

personal enmity, though at times it might have been expedient to use somewhat gentler methods.

He swore copiously at the people he disliked. His vocabulary, acquired partly in Siberia, partly in his days as a socialist, partly the sheer expression of military zeal, was now entirely unrestrained. After a long illness in the first half of 1929 he broke silence in a newspaper article published one Sunday morning by all the chief papers in the country. The article was an attack on the Sejm. The vials of its author's passionate wrath were emptied into print in a stream of invective so unparliamentary that no foreign newspaper could reproduce it as it stood.

At times he would accept the sharpest criticism. He would take it best from soldiers who were allowed more freedom than other people, since he felt they were the only men to be trusted. One day an officer was announced whom Pilsudski had promoted colonel and who had come to the Ministry for War to receive his new commission from his Chief. In the next room there sat Colonel Prystor, a close friend and fanatical admirer of Pilsudski. Formalities were gone through; the new Colonel addressed the Marshal.—"If you please, sir, I should like to say a word."

"Go on."

"I think, sir, I ought to tell you that in May I didn't fight on your side. I fought on the side of the government."

"Well, go on—what if you did?"

"Well, sir, even to-day, I'm not a Pilsudski enthusiast."

Pilsudski stood up. "For heaven's sake, Colonel, not so loud. Prystor's in there; he might hear you. He mustn't know that I'm not either."

Though he took no trouble to increase his popularity with civilians, he was always careful to see that the army

spoke well of him. The army was still his chief concern. Politically he had almost ceased to believe that he could carry through the reforms he had intended; but Poland, at least, should have the finest army that any modern state could produce. And he succeeded in building up an organization whose immaculate discipline was his pride and which worked more smoothly than any other public department. His enemies, even, who had criticized his talents as a general, had to admit that in military organization he was supreme.

But in other departments he ceased to be in touch with the daily needs of the country. Very few had access to him, and his intimates, the blindest of "Pilsudski enthusiasts," did not show him things as they were. Few dared speak with any freedom. For most he had become so much a legend that his very presence over-awed them till they dared give nothing its right name. They could not see a man of flesh and blood, a man of passions, gifts and many faults; they saw fifty years of Polish development, the long preparation for a struggle which had become historic, the uncertain beginnings of regiments that had once been legions, a sudden gift of freedom, a force that had sprung again to life. They seldom had eyes for Josef Pilsudski, the Minister for War.

And the few in whom he still confided, with whom he discussed affairs of state, were not his official colleagues, the Ministers he himself had created. As a rule they were ex-officers from the legions, men who, in various military posts, had meanwhile reached colonel's rank. They had been, for years, his closest associates, were devoted to him body and soul, agreed with whatever he had to say, and so obtained an ever-increasing influence on the political destinies of the country. These legionaries, as a rule plain soldiers, had suffered all the hardships of the struggle for in-

dependence. The Marshal was their god. They were without experience of politics, had no knowledge of the government of states, but believed that their sense of duty, their devotion to the Chief, their integrity, could replace whatever they might lack of administrative and technical capacity.

They had gained Pilsudski's ear, and through him controlled policy. Opposition newspapers would suggest that there were two Polish governments, an official which remained almost inactive, an unofficial, which did the work. "Belvedere" had become a political term: it meant not only the decisions and policy of the Marshal, but whatever gave any indication of the line his colonels would take. The word "Belvedere" meant a certain shade of opinion, the declaration of a faith, promulgated from a holy of holies, which initiates alone could penetrate.

Even March 19th, the feast of St. Joseph, Pilsudski's patron saint, was no exception. It had become a kind of national holiday. On this day landowners and officers, politicians and diplomats, crowded the Belvedere to offer congratulations to the Marshal. But Pilsudski kept himself concealed; only the elect could approach him. Adjutants would receive the chief guests; the public had to be content with bunting, flags and many wreaths. Sometimes the Marshal would attend a gala performance at the Opera, in the course of which the army and the President could congratulate.

The Cabinet resigned in the spring of 1929. Colonels began to govern officially. Pilsudski remained Minister for War and Inspector in Chief of the army. Many ministers were officers on the active list. Officially, even, they were subordinate to the Minister for War—their "colleague."

CHAPTER V

AFTERGLOW

PILSUDSKI had grown old, yet he was scarcely more than sixty. He looked much older. The hardships of his twenties, the dangers and labour of his manhood, a middle age of work and care, had set deep marks upon his face. His forehead had been wide and beautiful; now it was broken up in many furrows. The lines round his eyes, the creases round his mouth, were heavier; his thick moustache was almost white. His hair stood up as stiff and stubborn as before; but his teeth were gone, his face looked old and fallen in. Yet his eyes were still alert; the whole taut energy of his body set off the rest in vivid contrast. Even now an inner vitality held this figure erect, and gave it a youth out of keeping with his sagging face.

At home he still wore the plain, unbraided tunic of the legions with its dull buttons, without epaulettes. But on state occasions he liked to be magnificent. He alone in the whole army never wore the new regulation field-green. His gala uniform of soft cloth was a light, resplendent sky-blue.

It was long since he had dressed as a civilian: in Sulejowek, even, he had worn uniform. When, in 1927, he had gone to Geneva to attend a Conference of the League, his adjutants had found it hard to persuade him that he must not appear in full regimentals with sabre and military orders, but must get himself a suit of mufti. It seemed to him an unnecessary sacrifice, since, whenever he had to

speak in public, he liked to rest his hands on his sabre-hilt. Deprived of this support, he was uncomfortable and became less sure of himself.

His health had never been robust; the strain of the last years had hardened his arteries. Once or twice in the course of every year he was obliged to spend a couple of weeks in bed, give up his work, receive no visitors.

The division between appearance and reality had melted almost completely in the course of the last few years. Sometimes he would sit for many hours, rigid, his eyes half-closed; spring up and address an invisible guest, discuss politics and the army in blank verse, and tell of a past experience. If the verse flowed smoothly he could improvise, almost without a break, for hours. His political methods were so unusual, the surprises he prepared so bewildering, that stories had begun to spread, many of which verged on the macabre. The soil had been prepared by his silence, which lasted several months at a time, and the absence of all definite information. He was rarely seen in Warsaw streets, scarcely ever at a public function: very few people had access to him. Foreign celebrities, who had come to Warsaw specially to meet him, had often to go away disappointed. If they were soldiers they had a chance.

Warsaw, a city of much gossip, hummed with "Pilsudski" stories. Their source, as a rule, was the Sejm, which took a childish pleasure in belittling a great opponent whose celebrity could not be attacked in other ways. If Pilsudski were absent several weeks he was "known" at once to be very ill; the most fantastic stories were believed.

The news of his illness and removal to the Military Hospital let loose a flood of imbecilities. The atmosphere around him was electric, the smallest spark was enough to cause a detonation. During his illness, in the spring

of 1929, the country woke up one morning to learn from some "unimpeachable source" that he had tried to shoot his doctor during the night and break up the furniture in his sick-room.

It was easy enough, since talking involved no special dangers, to spread the most unfounded sensationalism. A very imaginative right-wing editor was certainly thrashed by officers in the street, and the word "dictatorship" kept buzzing from morning till night; but the freedom of the press remained unchallenged, no proceedings were taken against any citizen; the autocratic methods of countries governed by dictatorship were never used. Pilsudski spent some of his time in the Belvedere, the rest in his quarters in the War Office. He wanted, if possible, to keep his days free for his children, and worked on till well into the night. At times, fagged out, in the early hours of the morning he would imagine sudden steps and voices; at such moments, when his nerves were on edge, his mind could show him vivid images. A voice outside the door would be enough to make him seize his revolver. One morning a watch-dog, kept in the next room to guard him, was found with a bullet in its body. Nobody in the Belvedere mentioned it, but the news leaked out, and the shot dog became a shot sentry, and finally an officer. Pilsudski himself lived on the borderland of dreams; every story, every fresh piece of gossip, was a mixture of fancy and reality.

Pilsudski had grown old. An occasional patience, a hand at cards, had become almost his sole amusement. Politics had ceased to be a passion; even his delight in the army was not so deep. The complexities of the modern world passed his eyes without his being really aware of them. Technical progress did not interest him. When confronted with ma-

chinery, he felt a little helpless, a little ignorant. Even the telephone was something rather queer, a piece of strange new world from which he preferred to keep as far as possible. He admired aviation, and felt it to be a part of his duty to appreciate and encourage this new arm, but in his heart of hearts he could never feel really attracted by it. He was a stranger to the new enthusiasms, the authentic passion for machinery which can appreciate a mechanized age. At times he would speak copious panegyrics on the wonders of modern technique, but his remarks were always generalized and vague; they showed no instinctive sympathy or vital interest. It was a world with which he was unconnected by any bonds of passion or necessity. And the arts meant very little; they would furnish neither dreams nor compensations; they had nothing to give him, since nothing impelled him to seek. Such poetry as could arouse his enthusiasm only stirred him because it was patriotic and seemed to express the spirit of the nation; and for this reason, too, he sometimes liked to visit the theatre. The heroes of such great plays as he could enjoy were beings that he compared to himself; as the creations of an art they had no meaning. He did small credit to his countrymen's musical reputation. He liked the peasant airs, which had once been the marching songs of his legions and which now a whole army sang; but he rarely succeeded in humming or whistling them in tune. Sometimes a national holiday, a distinguished foreign guest, a gala performance in his honour, would force him to attend the Opera. He would sit in his box, or in the President's box opposite, and stare down in bewilderment at all that was happening beneath him—the great house, glittering with crimson satin and gilt stucco, the wives of his ministers and generals, who seemed "to have far too much

money on their backs." How seriously they were taking it all! It might have been a Council of State!

And then the stage! The silly and impossible things that happened on it—lovers who kissed for a quarter of an hour on end! Operatic murder, adultery, elopement, in front of a row of men and women, stuck up at the back all the time, raising their arms and shouting every couple of minutes: these singers with their complicated trills, behaving as though they didn't care in the least what they were saying. This whole opera business was ridiculous.

Sometimes he would think it out. What did it all really mean? But he never managed to understand what had roused so much noisy applause. The orchestra alone, whose expert pains he could appreciate, prevented him from sitting back in the box and dozing behind the satin curtain. He admired the conductor, he could see how he had to work: the drilled musicians seemed to him of far more interest than anything that happened on the stage. But, apart from these unified labours, there was little to attract him in the orchestra. He could follow no theme among all this multiplicity of instruments, each doing something different—all giving out the same kind of sound.

He had been persuaded to install a loud speaker at the Belvedere. He would come into the room and watch his family as they sat listening to the music. He was surprised and rather puzzled. How could they possibly enjoy hearing the same tunes every day? It was explained that every day the tunes were different, and he found it rather less incomprehensible.

Society and hobbies attracted him as little as the arts, yet he had no friends to replace them. Years ago he had scarcely noticed that he was friendless; now he had only assistants, admirers, servants. He had needed the distant

crowds that worshipped him; they had strengthened his belief in himself; they were the solid earth beneath his feet, the sap of their life was in his actions. But he would often regret his lack of friends. He had set a distance between himself and all other men which made every intimacy impossible. He could still win any person who interested him. On rare occasions, when he appeared at some party at a Legation, scarcely a guest to whom he had said a word or who had listened to his conversation could restrain his enthusiasm for the Marshal. But they had felt a personality, not a friend.

Only his children could really give Pilsudski what he asked. Each day brought them nearer together. He had always needed a child—if possible, of course, a son, but a son to carry on his name. He had had no time for young people. The young seemed so scatter-brained, so careless —irresponsible beings he had never understood. He had been fond enough of his step-daughter, the daughter of his first wife's previous marriage; but this child had been dead many years, a whole life-time divided them. This instinct had been asleep. He was painfully aware of the distance between himself and other men, of all that cut him off from the past—from vanished interests for which he had lived and which now were disillusion or possession, or the ambitions that could never be realized.

But now he had daughters of his own—here was a world for which he could live. Children had begun to interest him; his daughters' questions could fill him with as much excitement as he had felt at any crisis of his life, and he worked out their answers as carefully as if they had been the knottiest points of government.

He had never had much interest in other men; he had thought of them because he worked with them or fought

them, because they were in some way indispensable; if he had wanted to understand it had been to use. And if he had tried to see a man objectively, he himself had frustrated his own object, since his interest soon became self-comparison. His life had been one long domination; he had poured his soul and essence into others, who submitted willingly to the dynamic quality of his mind. But now two beings could hold his interest, an interest greater than his affection, greater even than the pleasure they could furnish. He found secrets in his daughters whose existence he had never guessed.

Each day he made fresh efforts to penetrate these unknown regions. He had found a new ambition. Each sign that his children were, somehow, different, every noticeable step in their development, filled him with apprehension. One of his girls was independent and very sure of herself. Her courage pleased him, but it made him uneasy to remember all the dangers which beset human beings who go their own ways in the world, and he trembled to think of all the paths which might lead her away from his side.

All children had begun to interest him. Children's picnics, in summer, in the country, were now his favourite amusement: children's society the society he really preferred. When his daughters were small, all this had had a tincture of politics, he had been rather pleased at stories of how children "got on" with him. Marshal Pilsudski would be seen on a seat on the boulevard, a little boy on his knee, a crowd of strange children round him, who made him tell them stories and insisted on his playing with their Teddy Bears.

But very soon this ceased to be part of a programme. He forgot that his "love of children" might do much for

a Marshal's popularity and increase his heroic prestige. Gradually, as years went by, he had ceased to care how popular he was. He began to like these children for their own sakes. The child had become a being of the very first importance. In the summer of 1929 the country had been promised a speech. It had expected a burst of denunciation, political exposures, some unvarnished threatening of an opponent, but his theme was "Education and the Child." And he spoke with all the passion at his command of the care, the love, the understanding with which all children must be treated.

Children had brought him pleasures which till now he had never experienced—a release which had in it nothing of the deepest, warning voice of his subconsciousness, an escape—with neither memory nor presentment—from the grim and cruel sides of life. As a child he had scarcely tasted the authentic, careless freedom of youth; he had to be sixty to realize how hard his life had really been, how few untroubled pleasures he had known. An idea had robbed him of his childhood. When had he ever been a child? Had he ever lived without a purpose—let himself be borne pleasantly away down the joyous current of sheer being, without ambition, with no task he had bent his whole strength to perform? Had he ever gone out into a day unweighted with his destiny—ever dreamed one shining, clear, untrammelled dream? Had he ever been allowed to be a child?

It was all the easier now to go back to what he had lost for half a century. A world lay between him and his past; no urge, no longing, could rob this childhood of its freshness. One morning he opened his eyes, and his first thought was of a wish a child had spoken the night before. Everything else seemed trivial, he was aware that only old

men can really know the happiness of children. The heat of our longings must be quenched, we must be cured of the insanity of achievement, to learn the glad forgetfulness of a child. He had never felt so light-hearted as on this day of new-found youth.

But away from his children there was a void. Though his temperament refused to let him idle, nothing that he did could satisfy. He was sick of politics, hated the Sejm, which had not acclaimed his measures of reform. He saw personal motives behind every move in parliament. Politics were becoming economics, and these he did not really understand. His belief that he still had tasks to perform brought him back to the political arena. There were many hours when his craving to be active was uppermost, and the army as a rule was his outlet. He thought out new regulations, went into every military detail. But the army was often not enough; he would begin, with exaggerated zeal, to study international politics. When, in the summer of 1929, tension between Russia and China was acute, he made Polish representatives in China send him daily and very costly telegrams on the latest developments of the situation, as though Poland were the centre of the conflict. Since his visit to Japan in 1905 he had always taken an interest in the Far East. He still remembered with pride how he had known the whole strategic position down the long Japanese front in every detail. Sometimes he would feel that home affairs had begun to slip away from his control, that the Republic was beginning to do without him. He attempted to prove, with each new sporadic fit of zeal, that he was still the central figure of the state. Periods of excessive vitality would be followed by weeks of apathy, when he would sit for hours and ponder "this country" and "these people." His thoughts would run to

aphorisms and generalizations which he did not square with the facts. He still looked forward to the day when Poland should become a first-class power, drew parallels between his country and others to discover what hindered Poland from developing in the way he had dreamed. Above all, he saw self-seeking and individualism, of which he had always perceived the dangers.

He was aware that the greatest efforts of Poland had all been due to strong racial feeling. Now, Poland was a unity like her neighbours, with her own laws, frontiers and customs—a closed society strong enough to survive as a unit, a nation whose autonomy was her pride. But whereas the Poles made every effort to build up and affirm their national consciousness, Pilsudski saw that in the west racial feeling had begun to weaken. States were no longer closed communities, each of which could live its own life and take no account of its neighbours; their frontiers mattered less from day to day. They were far more interdependent than in the past. Modern statesmanship, he felt, should have international aims. It seemed clearer and clearer that no single country could achieve till she knew how to be part of a greater whole. All individualism, therefore, must be sacrificed to mutual interest.

And within the state divisions were becoming less marked. The class-spirit of before 1914 had begun to disappear in the new society. With the League of Nations there was a real nucleus of internationalism. Any action which stressed a personality, a class, a race, a single political unit, was ceasing to be of value to the world. (Egotism, as a philosophic concept, was refuted by the collectivist idea.) Men whose ambitions were individual were no longer in harmony with their times. The efforts even of great personalities whose gifts and power set them well

above the majority of their fellows must be made on the community's behalf and no longer for personal ends. It was a question to-day of carrying through gigantic schemes which affected hundreds of thousands; the captains of industry who had begun to rule Europe and America, did not, like the leaders of the past, follow their star at the expense of a whole people; they were the expression of a collective will to betterment. Individual consciousness, even, was beginning to be lost in the whole.

Pilsudski felt this spirit from abroad, yet in Poland it seemed to have no meaning. His eyes, which could only rest on heights, beheld, from summit to summit, the vision of a distant future—a future in which the crowd was no longer the great monster of to-morrow marching forward, drilled and tamed, in the unity demanded by the times—it had become thousand-headed and yet personal, each unit in its vast collective strength a conscious individual obeying a common will. He could see a collectivism, born of no frustration of individuals, but the highest expression of each.

But Pilsudski could only see the future: he forgot the part which he himself had played in the unification of a people. He could not see that he himself was the obstacle to any coming society of his desire. He had never noticed the stress he had laid on every ideal of personal, individual power, how he had kept these things before the nation's eyes. No other man expressed the mind of yesterday so clearly and successfully as he. He was the last flame in a dying fire of history—the history of the Polish nineteenth century—the great conspirator, the romantic, the Carbonaro. He had striven, no doubt, for a people, but this very people had been so overshadowed by his will that its

battles had become his own. He had never struggled for Poles—always for the idea:—Poland.

He forgot, or refused to admit, his limitations, could not see the exact part he had played on the stage of this new Polish state, since he felt he could play them all. He never remembered that his struggles had been those of a rebel. He had prepared the ground, and forced a victory. It had been his mission to unchain that part of the people's strength which, at the moment, must and could be released. He had been the incarnation of these forces, sole hero in a great prologue—the rebirth of the Polish nation. This prologue he had played with perfect mastery. But now that the curtain was down, the stage set with other scenery, new actors ready in the wings with a new technique and new parts to deliver, he wanted, still, to play the hero. He had never inspired a will to collective action, always to such individual glories as inevitably perish in the end. His eyes were set on a glorious Polish future, but his actions and fate had bound his people to every method of the past.

This age had become an age of technique, of slow construction—facts; it demanded the scientific method. But Pilsudski had been the master of imponderabilia. His victories had never been won by the use of any calculable force, by money, system, artillery, organization. The glamour he could cast over all things had lit up a people's soul. His admirers could not see that his mountains had been moved by faith, that his victory was the victory of sheer will; they were themselves enthralled by this magnetism, by just this incalculable force. But the times had changed; they demanded experts, and clear measures, valuable in themselves, not for their background. Pilsudski could not, certainly, be divorced from the ensemble of

Polish life, but he had ceased to be Poland's leader. He was Poland's legend. His name was still the greatest Polish name; but its sound had less and less real influence, it had become traditionally glorious.

Though many of the workmen still looked up to him, though for peasants and small shop-keepers he was what he had always been, his power in the land, in any constructive sense, had weakened.

He meant less and less to the post-war generation. Though one day it would be their task to work out his ideas for the new state, they were far from any world which he could realize. Young people were looking to the west, or to America; behind his back they were shaping their own internationalism. New economic laws and necessities had begun to create new ways of life; the young had discarded the romantic notions of his age. Their own was westernized; its voice sounded thinner and less effective, but it expressed the necessities of the times. Young Poland had caught the note of the post-war world. It was little given to sentiment, and stressed, perhaps unduly, matters of fact. Mechanized hygiene and work, a new mechanized existence, had produced the mechanization of art and thought. Mechanical structure was becoming an obsession of the young; they were forgetting the spirit which must inform and give that structure life. This generation was turning away from every parade of feeling, since it felt it could ill-afford such luxuries. It concentrated on isolated processes, since it had no time for the whole. Speed was its god; it preferred rhythm to melody. In this age of new and commonplace ambitions expressed in rather tinny accents, the Marshal had begun to date. He had become so very historical that it seemed a little hard to keep in touch with him. He was a gifted soldier, a colossal and

patriotic figure, an idealist and "very interesting"; but Polish freedom and the republic seemed the result of an historical necessity, the work of an entire nation, of a whole re-grouping of forces in which foreign countries had played a decisive part. The new generation could scarcely realize how much of it all was due to the actions of one great individual whose vision had fired the minds of his contemporaries. Pilsudski already seemed part of another world.

And young Poland was not sorry to forget that the Republic was so new. The days of the partition were romantic, but there were other, far more interesting, topics. How absurd to go on repeating for ever the catchwords and traditions of the old! It was all so stale,—it had ceased to be either "news" or reality, it was exaggerated, "colourful" "sob-stuff." Banners, white eagles, purple, were enough in themselves to make one shiver. Sex-hygiene and racing-cars, negro sculpture, trips to Tahiti, sport, films, and, above all else, "economic independence" were the slogans that now prevailed. There is always something a little pompous about the ideals of a past generation, and these ideals had not merely been the father's, but the grandfather's, and great-grandfather's as well. To the young the very word "Marshal" had a slightly melodramatic ring; it went with the property swords of the pre-war theatre, with calico banners at the back of a costumier's shop. In post-war Europe such assets belonged to review.

This generation had no perspective which might have shown the greatness of the Marshal, and party feeling centred too much round Pilsudski to enable the young to be detached. The conservative influence was as strong among university students in Poland as it was in either

Germany or France; the hero of yesterday held no interest, and right-wing leader still saw in Pilsudski an adventurer.

On the other hand, there were partizans and admirers so overwhelmed with the greatness of their hero that they refused to let him be appraised and saw in every judgment a sacrilege. For them there was no measure for such a man.

He was the man who had realized every ideal, whose very failures had been greater than his enemies' highest achievements. His deficiencies seemed entirely due to opponents, since others had impeded his measures. These people were too single-minded to see this greatness as something of advantage to themselves; its glamour was entirely its own. They could not write of "Him" except with a capital, he was the most glorious genius in all history, the man who united in himself every gift of statesmen and great soldiers. Their judgment was childish, though their love was heroic and pure. They would cite Napoleon or compare him with his great contemporaries, Mussolini and Lenin, whom they set in miniature beside him.

Mussolini was their obvious comparison; the same outward circumstances led them to deceptive parallels. The socialist past had been the same; there was the same sternness and integrity, the same "daimonism"—there had been the same march on a capital.

But the Italian's achievement was rooted in the classic past. Pilsudski had seen with the eyes of a romantic. He, unlike Mussolini, had had no clear, objective vision of the nature and necessities of the State. Pilsudski had remained a romantic. Mussolini's classicism stood on a solid pedestal of statesmanship. He had made a single romantic gesture when he formed his Fascist Legion and marched on the city of Kings and Popes. He had used his roman-

ticism only as an instrument of government which the psychology of his people made expedient. Pilsudski was inclined to oppose and disintegrate—Mussolini to consolidate and stabilize. If the one could be called dynamic, the other was essentially static. Poland's Marshal acted on sudden flashes of inspiration. The Duce strove, at the end of long deliberation, to work out vast traditional schemes which had already been conceived in ancient Rome. Historians, philosophers, scientists, and architects were the minds that attracted Mussolini. Pilsudski loved one poet, the most individual poet of his country. Mussolini's conceptions were intellectual, Pilsudski's emotional and intuitive. Pilsudski might be called Cæsar, if Mussolini were Augustus.

But while Mussolini was formed on the classic pattern of dictators, Pilsudski had striven to be true to the democracy he respected. Mussolini's every measure was dictatorial; Pilsudski, as a rule, would show only the forms of dictatorship. The Italian Premier had disregarded the "Rights of Man"; he governed with a single party, suppressed free speech, made public life impossible for opponents. Pilsudski, in spite of everything, had not laid hands on any freedom.

And a universe was between him and Lenin. The Russian's activities had all been centred in the State; he had been impelled, but never guided, by emotion; his ideas had been utopian, but defined; though visionary, his conceptions were not instinctive. He had striven, in a world of hard facts, to make his Utopia a reality, struggled to objectify his dreams through government departments and new laws,—through every ramification of bureaucracy, economic policy, scheme for electrification. If his

thought had been idealistic, then his methods had been the methods of a realist.

Both Lenin and Mussolini worked through intellect; Pilsudski had flamed to power through his emotion. His faith had been deeper than theirs, his enthusiasm still more unquenchable—his task more difficult. He had had to create something new, not to improve an already existing structure; to teach his countrymen will and belief, prepare their minds for an inheritance, give them power to struggle for it and win it. But now he stood at the end of an age, on the threshold of the land that he had conquered and kept them from present possession or future enrichment of his conquest.

One evening Pilsudski sat alone in his room in the Belvedere. He thought of present defeats and opposition, of all the tasks he would have to leave unfinished. It had been one of those days on which everything seems the bitterest vanity: he turned to the past for strength and courage. His thoughts went back to achievements, to struggles with enemy hosts. Black hostility had been the background of his life. He had fought the Colossus Czarist Russia, fought Austria, fought Germany. He should have been able to conquer them; he had given up his life to this victory.

There had been Czardom; how he had hated its power, its methods! youth and manhood had gone in that battle. —The Russia of the Czars had crashed to earth.

But had his fire and sacrifice helped their overthrow? Had he killed Czarist Russia—had his dagger found its place in her side? Had it been his will that forced her to drop her Polish booty?

And when further hostilities were purposeless, when the Russia of the Czars had fallen, he had turned on another enemy and fought the Central Powers.

But to what end? There, too, he had longed for a crash of empires which should leave a united fatherland. These enemies had both been too enfeebled to keep their grip on Polish territory, and the great provinces of the west had become a part of the new State. Was it he who had felled these giants? He who had torn away their plunder?

Again and again he had fought and hated and watched other strength bring down his foe. What use had he ever been? His thoughts appalled him. Each memory brought despair. This ageing man in the greyish tunic, whose white moustache hid toothless gums, let his head sink on his breast.

He stared at the fading pattern of his carpet, whose colour dimmed with the light. His face in the shadow seemed a piece of crinkled, greyish, yellowing leather: he raised his hand and gripped the table before him.

No, a thousand times! Even if all that were true; if not one of these defeats had been his work, he had struggled on behalf of his country, Poland had taken the reward, his country, his home, his people—

Who were his people?—Dwarfs like these—jabbering, quarrelsome dwarfs, who slyly laid stones across his way. Was this the nation he had dreamed? This generation of Poles, born to the gaols of Austria, Russia, Germany—things that had grown up in slavery! Had serfs the strength for a day of glory and rejoicing, such a day as he alone could give? There must be a new, free generation, born in a new free Poland, unburdened—free—like his two girls. . . .

The man in the chair drew a breath so deep that it could almost stifle thoughts. His hand still rested on the table, his head was a grey mass in the twilight. A door shut somewhere in the castle—one thud—then everything was still again. It was almost dark.

But everything had not been vanity, his consciousness urged, tremulous. There had been great deeds—his deeds. But even if the present generation had no strength to use his gifts, the gift itself had been worth having.

And its price? The old man in the legion uniform moaned—quietly, almost inaudibly. His head fell lower still between his shoulders. Its price?—he seemed a hundred years old.—Its price? The price of 1914, of 1920,—the price of 1926?—Had it been the price of success, or would success have come without his paying it?—

A Sunday when workers came out into Warsaw streets with banners and songs of independence—in streets all over Poland—1905.

—Out in all the streets with their songs:—then came the Russian cavalry squads: Gendarmes! Cossacks!—

Empty streets—dead workmen in their Sunday best lying here and there on pavements: red pools in streets all over Poland.

Then those boys, the young boys of the legions,—out to fight Russia with the Austrians, the boys who lay down on Polish earth—lay down never to get up again.—And then?

Empty universities, empty schools.—The summer of 1920. All those excited boys, marching out under the flags of a hero—out to fight the Bolsheviks. Trams and trains and cars from the front full of young men back in Warsaw, some of them still alive. . . . Most came back with music; music and wreaths: colonels making a speech; then

they begin to shovel in the earth: one spadeful; then another spadeful; then one more—one more—so many. . . . Yes—And then?

More young men—grown men; men who were friends or enemies; men who'd never seen each other before; men who believed, or didn't—men picked up off Warsaw streets; taken away into hospital, taken away; laid out. The heavy May scent of elderbushes, crushed acacias strewn about behind the barricades, their small, white flowers warm with spring. . . . That was 1926.

Who could count the price? . . .

The hours passed. The man in the chair did not notice that outside the window it had been dark for a long time. Unstirred leaves in the deep, mute peace of the garden. No door slammed anywhere: it was quiet. He sat on and on and never moved.

A fly buzzed twice round the table, buzzed in the Marshal's ear, settled on his hand, which lay, inert, before him. He felt nothing. His fear had left him.—Many years ago. Æons ago. Yes, eternity on eternity. These questionings on what he had meant and been and done were far in the distance behind him. He had no more need to look into himself to solve riddles. Every answer would always be an enigma, yet every answer was plain. Victory and defeat, appearance and reality, significance or illusion were things which must be seen from outside life. These things were patterned in the stars, they belonged to the stars—the stars—not to the earth.

Pilsudski slowly opened his eyes. They were blue and tender. A smile played round the toothless mouth under the white moustache; the fly rose from his hand, buzzed

round the table, settled on the rim of the ash-tray.

Pilsudski rose. His step was as light as the step of a young man. He went to the door and crossed the passage to the room where his children lay asleep.

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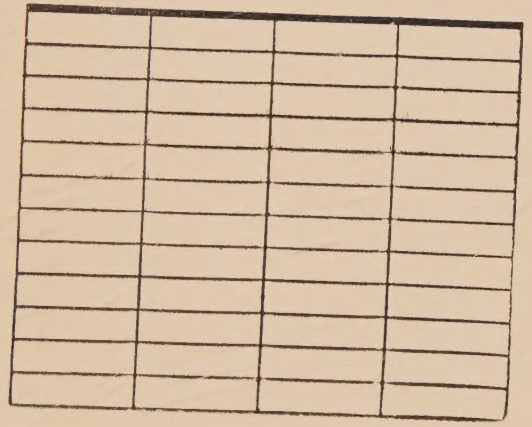

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